

# **A Pluralistic and Comparative Analysis of Gentrification in London and New York**

by

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I declare that the work contained in this thesis and its appendices has been composed by myself the undersigned, and is my own work. It has not been offered for any other degree.

Loretta Conway Lees



## ABSTRACT

The central objective of this thesis is to present an account of gentrification that overcomes some of the weaknesses of existing analyses. In particular, I attempt to move away from singular theoretical analyses and I seek to capture more fully the "chaos and complexity" of gentrification (Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986). In so doing I argue that gentrification cannot be understood in terms of universal explanatory statements but that local specificities are fundamental to the phenomenon.

To open up the analysis of gentrification, I adopt some ideas from postmodernism: pluralism and contextualism. These two ideas form the background to the specific objectives of this thesis:

Firstly, theoretical pluralism is investigated through the juxtaposition of marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification. By juxtaposing these two key theoretical/conceptual frameworks of understanding I deliver an illustration of gentrification which is sensitive to the economic, cultural, social, spatial and political dimensions of the process. I discuss the complementarities and productive tensions which exist between these two sets of ideas.

Secondly, the contextualism of the gentrification process is investigated through a comparison of gentrification in London and New York. I consider whether an Atlantic Gap is evident between gentrification in two neighbourhoods: Barnsbury in the inner London borough of Islington, and Park Slope in the Brooklyn borough of New York City.

An emphasis on theoretical pluralism questions the ontological security of singular theorizations, and an emphasis on contextualism questions universal explanations of gentrification.

By undertaking an analysis of gentrification in London and New York using two theoretical frameworks, I challenge the way that singular explanations have created dichotomies which function to maintain theoretical order in the gentrification literature. I offer a way of overcoming the sterility of these dichotomies and their stranglehold on discussion.

In this I argue that the differences between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification are not as sharp as the literature would have us believe. Postmodernist explanations of gentrification tend to focus on postmodernity as an object, not postmodernism as an attitude. One consequence of this is that many postmodernist explanations fall back on modernist theories such as marxism and humanism and only occasionally adopt attitudes from postmodernism.

By comparing gentrification in London and New York I reveal not only the contextuality of the process but also the contextuality of theorizations of the process. For example, Smith's (1979a,1982) rent gap is only useful as an explanation of gentrification in New York, and Hamnett and Randolph's (1984,1986) value gap is only useful as an explanation of gentrification in London.

This thesis does not shatter the bases of analyses of gentrification, but it does shatter the adherence to singular theoretical constructs and universal meta-narratives.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

*"As they drew nearer to Gabriel's house, they crossed a couple of squares with which Clara was vaguely familiar, squares once thoroughly decayed, and now full of that apparatus of demolition and construction; the area attracted her strongly, in its violent seedy contrasts, its juxtaposition of the rich and poor, its rejection of suburban uniformity. Anything unfamiliar attracted her...She looked at the peeling, cracked façades, and the newly plastered, smartly painted ones, and she thought that she would like to have lived there, among such new examples" (Zwart, 1973:28).*

### 1.1 Defining Gentrification

After thirty years of research, the debate over the meaning of gentrification remains unresolved (see Bourne, 1993:96-98). The term "Gentrification" was first used by Glass (1964:xviii) with reference to processes observed in London:

*"One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes - upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages...have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period - which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation - have been upgraded once again...Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed".*

A similar process was soon recognized in the United States and elsewhere where it was given the same name. However, many researchers in the United States prefer to use the term "revitalization", because they see the English class connotations associated with the term "gentrification" as inappropriate for the American city. Indeed realtors in the United States prefer the terms "rehabilitation" and "renovation", for these have not acquired the political sensitivity associated with the term



gentrification<sup>1</sup>. But "rehabilitation" and "renovation" are not always synonymous with gentrification. For example, council house rehabilitation in Britain, and rehabilitation undertaken by the working class and other groups is not associated with socio-economic change and therefore does not constitute gentrification. It is better defined as incumbent upgrading (see Clay, 1979). Some authors term areas which were previously vacant or in non-residential use and have been redeveloped for middle class housing, for example, London's Docklands, as gentrified. Others argue that here gentrification is an inappropriate term because a new social space has been created where none existed previously, as such Docklands is better defined as redeveloped (Bourne, 1993:97).

However, the word "gentrification" has gained in popularity both inside and outside of the academic world. Indeed Smith and Williams (1986:1) cite examples from American dictionaries, including, the American Heritage Dictionary 1982, which lists gentrification as the "restoration of deteriorated urban property especially in working class neighborhoods by the middle and upper classes". In the United Kingdom, the Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990, defines gentrification as "the social advancement of an inner urban area by the arrival of affluent middle class residents".

In this thesis I argue that these definitions of gentrification are too simple, in that general statements such as these neglect the importance of contextual factors in the

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<sup>1</sup> This was made all too apparent during a phone call I made to a realtor in Park Slope, New York, in the Spring of 1992, who protested that Park Slope had been "rehabilitated" not "gentrified".

gentrification process. By analyzing gentrification both theoretically and contextually I demonstrate its "chaos and complexity" (see Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986), rendering the need for both more sensitive definitions and pluralistic analyses of the process.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

*"I will argue that modern urban theory is becoming exhausted - something which rightish commentators have suspected for some time [Saunders and Williams, 1986] - and that a new, more appropriate theorization of the contemporary city is waiting to be born" (Cooke, 1990:331).*

The central aim of this thesis is to consider gentrification in a more sensitive and adequate manner than has been achieved to date. To undertake this I adopt two ideas from postmodernism: theoretical pluralism and contextualism.

Firstly, I seek to achieve theoretical and conceptual sensitivity through the construction of two complementary explanatory frameworks, one marxist and the other postmodernist. In so doing I seek to make the analysis of gentrification sensitive to economics and culture, production and consumption, supply and demand (see Hamnett, 1991a:174). This is a reaction against the uni-dimensional nature (singular theoretical explanations) of much of the gentrification literature to date. Although some studies have gone some way to overcome uni-dimensionality and have offered a more sensitive interpretation, problems still remain.

Secondly, I seek to achieve contextual sensitivity by exploring the differences between gentrification in London and New York. In so doing I assess whether an Atlantic Gap is in operation in the gentrification of the two cities. The notion of an Atlantic Gap was posited at the seminar on European gentrification in Utrecht, 1990 (see Musterd and van Weese, 1991 and Smith, 1991).

Theoretical pluralism is important in this thesis because the analysis of gentrification

*"...represents one of the key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds in urban geography, and indeed in human geography as a whole, between the liberal humanists who stress the key role of choice, culture, consumption and consumer demand, and the structural marxists who stress the role of capital, class, production and supply" (Hamnett, 1991a:174).*

These dichotomies serve their own conceptual camps. For a more sensitive explanation of gentrification than those provided by uni-dimensional analyses, the boundaries between different types of analyses need to be transgressed. But where Hamnett seeks to negotiate between liberal humanists and structural marxists, in this piece of work I seek to negotiate between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification. I define work that appeals to political-economic determination as marxist, and work that appeals to culture in analyzing the geography of postmodernity as postmodernist. On reading the gentrification literature I felt that the marxist and postmodernist analyses attained a higher degree of explanatory power. I study both explanations because of a refusal on my behalf to choose between the two (see Pile and Rose, 1992:123). Alone, neither marxist nor postmodernist analyses of gentrification seemed sufficient, and neither could claim to reveal the whole truth.

The **apparent** incommensurability<sup>2</sup> of both sets of analyses makes their juxtaposition particularly fruitful. Moreover, I held a suspicion that the two ways of looking at gentrification were not as different as their dichotomization in the literature suggested.

Contextualism is important in this thesis because gentrification in the main part has acquired an image of uniformity, it has been theorized as a universal process. I respond to this by comparing gentrification in London and New York. I want to,

*"generate an awareness of the different contexts in which gentrification arises and of the general (cross-national) and specific (national or local) elements of the process"* (Williams, 1986:57).

This relates directly to the debate over definitions of gentrification:

*"Many American analysts have been uncomfortable with the term 'gentrification' (with its obvious class connotations), preferring instead labels such as 'back-to-the-city movement', 'neighbourhood revitalization', and 'brownstoning', all of which were indicative of underlying divergences in what was believed to be central to this process"* (Williams, 1986:65).

A consideration of theoretical pluralism and contextualism demonstrates the relationship between meta-narrative and universality, for contextual differences are often subsumed within meta-narratives.

In response to these research objectives the thesis has been structured as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Part of the incommensurability of marxism and postmodernism originates in their respective modernist and postmodernist conceptualizations. Pile and Rose (1992:129) assert that only in feminist critiques are modernism and postmodernism not polar opposites, for the point of feminist critiques of them both is the same: "these discourses avoid the politics of gender and race (Rose, 1987)". Therefore marxism and postmodernism are likewise not polar opposites.

In Chapter 2 I clarify what I mean by marxist and postmodernist approaches to the study of gentrification and I comment on the limitations of these singular explanations. I also discuss some of the more eclectic approaches to the analysis of gentrification. I close the chapter by looking at the notion of contextuality arguing that a consideration of context negates the theoretical generalizations and singular statements found in explanations of gentrification.

Where Chapter 2 deconstructs, Chapter 3 reconstructs. I rethink the analysis of gentrification offering some positive suggestions on how to overcome the inadequacies of singular explanations of gentrification and I offer a way of approaching the lack of sensitivity to context. I provide a methodology for analyzing gentrification in London and New York.

In Chapter 4 I introduce my two study areas, one in London and the other in New York and I discuss my fieldwork in these two locations.

In Chapter 5 I illustrate gentrification in these two locations through a marxist framework and in Chapter 6 I illustrate gentrification in the two locations through a postmodernist framework. The comparative thread which runs through Chapters 5 and 6 considers the notion of an Atlantic Gap between gentrification in London and New York, thus investigating the contextuality of the process.

In Chapter 7 I offer some conclusions about theoretical pluralism, contextualism and gentrification.

## CHAPTER 2 THE ANALYSIS OF GENTRIFICATION

### 2.1 Introduction

*"[The starting point of epistemology is the] profound disinclination to halt once and for all at any collective view of the world. The charm of the opposite point of view: the refusal to relinquish the stimulus residing in the enigmatical" (Nietzsche, [1909]1968:5).*

In this chapter I want to clarify what I mean by marxist and postmodernist approaches to gentrification. I illustrate how the two theorizations have been operationalized in analyses of the urban process and gentrification, and I point to the limitations of both when used as two separate theories<sup>3</sup>.

Juxtaposing marxism and postmodernism illustrates a number of simple dichotomies; economic determinism and cultural determinism, production and consumption, structure and agency, supply and demand. Smith (1987c:163) argues that it is because the interaction between production and consumption has been inadequately explored that "researchers have tended to come down narrowly on one side of this dichotomy or the other". It is important to unpack these conflations to be able to rethink the analysis of gentrification. I then go on to trace the development of more eclectic analyses of gentrification. Finally, I look at the notion of contextuality in the gentrification literature, arguing that a consideration of context negates the theoretical

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<sup>3</sup> I recognize that all theories "...are to some extent repressive because they privilege certain kinds of explanation at the expense of others" (Cooke, 1990:335). Indeed theories have to be selective and cannot be all encompassing. Yet it is their selection procedures and analytical capabilities that are frequently responsible for their limitations.

generalizations and singular statements found in explanations of the gentrification process.

## **2.2 Marxist Analyses of Gentrification**

So what is marxism and what are its limitations for analyzing gentrification? In this thesis "marxist" is used to describe those authors who draw on Marx in terms of methodology and theory.

Marxism is a modernist theory developed in the C19th. As both theory and philosophy it entails a materialist conception of history, in which the mode of production and the movements of capital are the determining factors;

*"[historical materialism] designates that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggle of these classes against one another"* (Bottomore, Harris, Kiernan and Miliband, 1983:206, citing Engels, 1892).

Marxist approaches to geography emerged in the late 1960s, as a reaction against the restrictions of spatial science which ignored political and economic constraints. In "Social Justice and the City", Harvey (1973:288) defines marxism as follows;

*"the twin pillars of Marx's ontology are his conception of reality as a totality of internally related parts, and his conception of these parts as expandable relations such that each one in its fullness can represent the totality"*.

In his analyses of urban processes, Harvey adopts a political economy approach. Political economy is marxist in that it has a specific origin as the study of production,



distribution and accumulation of the surplus. Harvey (1973:295-296) cites Marx ([1859]1971:204-205) from "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy":

*"Production, distribution, exchange and consumption are...links of a single whole, different aspects of one unit. Production is the decisive phase...That exchange and consumption cannot be decisive elements is obvious, and the same applies to distribution in the sense of the distribution of products. Distribution of the factors of production on the other hand, is itself a phase of production. A distinct mode of production thus determines the specific mode of consumption, distribution, exchange, and the specific relations of these different phases to one another. Production in its narrow sense, however, is in its turn also determined by the other aspects. For example, if the market, or the sphere of exchange, expands, then the volume of production grows and tends to become more differentiated. Production also changes in consequence of changes in distribution, e.g. concentration of capital, different distribution of the population in town and countryside, and the like. Production is, finally, determined by the demands of consumption. There is an interaction between the various aspects. Such interaction takes place in an organic entity".*

In marxist theorizations production is simultaneously consumption; "consumption without production would have no object" and "the product only attains its final consummation in consumption" (Marx, [1859](1971):196). Yet they remain extrinsic to each other and production is prioritized as the decisive phase. Harvey (1981) looks at the urban process through two windows - the accumulation window and the class struggle window. I follow this and divide the gentrification literature written from a marxist perspective into accumulation analyses and class analyses.

### **2.2.1 Accumulation Analyses**

Accumulation (see Mandel, 1975:591) shows the increase in the value of capital that is caused by the transformation of part of the surplus-value into additional capital. In order to understand accumulation we must be able to understand the marxist concept of capital. Capital is exchange value which seeks a further accretion of value. Capital

is a process which reproduces social life through commodity production. Marx begins his analysis of capitalism with the commodity itself. Capital as a process operates with a set of rules which provide its dynamism, and in that its ability to transform society. Capital,

*"masks and fetishizes, achieves growth through creative destruction, creates new wants and needs, exploits the capacity for human labour and desire..."* (Harvey, 1989b:343).

Capital has a logic of its own which becomes apparent by the way it operates:

*"The essential marxian insight...is that profit arises out of the domination of labour by capital and that the capitalists as a class must, if they are to reproduce themselves, continuously expand the basis for profit. We thus arrive at a conception of society founded on the principle of 'accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake'"* (Harvey, 1982:91-92).

The accumulation process is periodically affected by contradictions which capitalism itself creates. Once the situation is resolved capital moves on to a higher plane of existence. In his analysis of the urban process, Harvey (1982) looks at capital flows, dividing these into three circuits; primary, secondary and tertiary. It is important to remember that these circuits are not working one by one but in unison as Harvey shows in "The Limits to Capital" (1982). Harvey demonstrates capital switching in the context of post-war suburban growth. To simplify, over-accumulation (a state in which there is a significant mass of excess capital in the economy, which cannot be invested at the average rate of profit normally expected by owners of capital) occurs in the primary circuit of capital, producing a surplus of capital and labour. The solution to the problem is but temporary: it is to move capital into long term assets, i.e. the built environment or secondary circuit, for here capital is usually immobile for a long period of time. But to do this a functioning capital market is required, as well

as a state willing to finance and guarantee long-term and/or large scale building projects. Also the switch between the two circuits cannot be accomplished without a money supply and a credit system which creates "fictional"<sup>4</sup> or "vapour" capital in advance of actual production and consumption. The built environment is a fixed geographical commodity which cannot be moved about, its attributes can be improved, and normally it does not change hands very often. As such it is a useful form of accumulation (Harvey, 1973:158-60). Harvey's circuits of capital thesis is rendered at a very general level, which makes it difficult to operationalize at a local scale. Yet if used as a framework of reference for analyzing gentrification it is valuable, as illustrated in work which uses the notion of uneven development to understand gentrification.

#### **2.2.1.1 Uneven Development**

Uneven development is a result of the laws of the motion of capital:

*"The accumulation of capital itself produces development and underdevelopment as mutually determining moments of the uneven and combined movement of capital"* (Mandel, 1975:85).

For Smith (1982:139), gentrification is but a part of the larger economic restructuring which is being caused by various crises in the capitalist mode of production; it is at the leading edge of uneven development. Smith traces gentrification through capital's movements,

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<sup>4</sup> Fictional capital does not contribute directly to the formation of surplus value. Marx gives mortgages and shares as examples, these are "claims" on future surplus value, which can be created by applying fixed and labour capital to production (Budd, 1992:280, note 1).

*"To borrow an image. Capital is like a plague of locusts, it settles on one place, devours it, then moves on to plague another place. Better, in the process of restoring itself after one plague the region makes itself ripe for another" (Smith, 1984:152)<sup>5</sup>.*

The frontier encompasses the economic and spatial elements of the gentrification process. Harvey (1981:113) illustrates how sensitive capital switching is, in terms of uneven development:

*"Capitalist development has to negotiate a knife-edge path between preserving the exchanged values of past capital investments in the built environment and destroying the value of these investments in order to open up fresh room for accumulation. Under capitalism there is, then, a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time".*

In 1982, Smith put forward a marxist theoretical framework for the study of gentrification, "in the spirit of a hypothesis". He argued that it is useful only for the insight which it gives into the mature, historical emergence of gentrification. Smith's framework consists of the three central elements of uneven development theory.

The first is the contradictory tendency towards the **differentiation and equalization of levels of development**. Smith uses the dialectic of differentiation and equalization to derive the spatial scales produced by capital. The dialectical tension between differentiation and equalization constitutes the underlying dynamic of geographical uneven development. The fuel for expansion is created through an increase in the quantity and variety of commodities being produced, and the profit yielded from this

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<sup>5</sup> In this image a process of conquest becomes apparent, Smith pursues this through the ideology of the gentrification frontier: "the imagery of frontier serves to rationalise and legitimate a process of conquest" (Smith, 1986:17).

is directed into further expansion. This expansion causes Marx's "annihilation of space with time", for capital will overcome all obstacles to its progress. Equalization has its roots in the production process, in the extraction of surplus value. Although equalization is attempted, it is frustrated by, for example, technological dynamism. Differentiation is reflected in;

*"the progressive division of labour at various scales, the spatial centralization of capital in some places at the expense of others, the evolution of a spatially differentiated pattern of wage rates, the development of a ground rent surface that is markedly uneven over space, class differences, and so forth"* (Smith, 1982:144).

Differentiation causes the polarization between developed and underdeveloped areas, for example, between inner-city and suburb, relevant to the process of gentrification.

The second facet of uneven development discussed is the **valorization and devalorization of built environment capital**. Capital is invested in the built environment in the search for profit, capital is immobilized in the building concerned, and, over time the valorized capital returns its value little by little. As it takes time for a return on investment, a particular landuse ties up tracts of land for long periods of time and creates obstacles to new development. At the same time though, devalorization is occurring in the building, this promotes opportunities for redevelopment. This devalorization cycle is quite visible, for example, abandoned buildings, physical neglect, but also invisible, for example, tax arrearage, tenure change.

The third feature of uneven development is **reinvestment and the rhythm of unevenness**. Capital undergoes periodic shifts in the location and quantity of investment in the built environment. Following Harvey (1978), Smith associates these periodic shifts with crises in the broader economy. In marxist theory crises are necessary agents in the move forward, i.e. to stimulate the pursuit of profit maximization. As capital flowed into the built environment in the property boom of 1969-1973 there were two choices; it could be invested in the suburbs or in the devalORIZED inner-city, generating gentrification. The rhythm of unevenness is perhaps best explained by Smith,

*"The logic behind uneven development is that the development of one area creates barriers to further development, thus leading to underdevelopment, and that the underdevelopment of that area creates opportunities for a new phase of development. Geographically this leads to the possibility of what we might call a 'locational seesaw': the successive development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment of given areas as capital jumps from one place to another, then back again, both creating and destroying its own opportunities for development" (Smith, 1982:151).*

#### **2.2.1.2 The Rent Gap Thesis**

One expression of uneven development associated with gentrification is Smith's (1979a) **rent gap thesis**<sup>6</sup>. Theorized in the context of United State's cities, the rent gap thesis argues that gentrification is a rational market response. Rent gaps occur because of the movement of capital through time and space, as expressed through the processes of devalorization and revalorization. The devalorization of capital in the inner-city built environment occurs where the market value of property is depressed,

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<sup>6</sup> A more basic version was discussed earlier, see Engel's "The Housing Question" (1872).



and is accompanied by various disinvestment strategies (see Smith, Duncan and Reid, 1989:240):

*"sustained disinvestment begins as a result of largely rational decisions by owners, landlords, local and national governments and an array of financial institutions"* (Bradford and Rubinowitz, 1975, cited by Smith et al., 1989:239).

Downs (1981:35) argues that "a certain amount of neighborhood deterioration is an essential part of urban development". The devalorization of capital (see Zukin, 1982[1988]:15, on capital flight) causes a situation where the ground rent under present land uses is substantially lower than the ground rent that could be capitalized on if the land was put to a better use. When the rent gap between the actual ground rent and the potential ground rent is large enough, reinvestment in the form of gentrification will occur. This is the best time for profitable investment.

Smith et al. (1989) attempt to establish the turning point at which disinvestment is succeeded by reinvestment, that is the onset of gentrification. Smith et al. (1989:242) juxtapose tax arrearage and tax redemption in terms of a dialectic:

*"Tax delinquency lies on the fulcrum between growth and decline, expansion and contraction, and all that follows from this balance".*

Smith et al. (1989) follow Salins (1981:17) who judges tax arrears to be

*"a very sensitive index of active and incipient housing destruction, especially when viewed in terms of length of delinquency, and the volume of properties at different stages of the arrears foreclosure pipeline".*

But De Giovanni (1983:35) looking for indicators of revitalization, decided that,

*"no one type of change will serve as the most reliable indicator of revitalization when measured at the neighborhood level, since conclusions regarding the beginning of reinvestment will likely vary with the indicator used...it would be incorrect to conclude that monitoring change in a single indicator is sufficient to predict other changes in the neighborhoods".*

I agree, and argue that Smith et al.'s (1989) usage of tax redemption as indicative of the onset of gentrification may be dubious because of the uni-dimensionality of the theory. Firstly, the focus is on the movement of capital, in which case the activities of pioneer gentrifiers are neglected, and secondly, the use of tax redemption as indicative of urban change seems too simplistic in its focus on one variable.

There have been a number of other criticisms of Smith's rent gap theory. Wilson (1991:409) argues that not all investors or developers have the perfect knowledge of optimal rent gap locations, some will search more than others, people's goals will be different. Ley (1986:531) finds no evidence in Canadian cities for the rent gap thesis. Smith (1987b) and Clark (1988) retaliate by asserting that Ley has incorrectly comprehended and operationalized the rent gap. Ley is seen to redefine the rent gap in terms of housing market dynamics. He does this by analyzing house price ratios instead of ground rents, thus negating the land market and broader economic processes which are the most relevant to the rent gap. But Smith realizes that his rent gap thesis has a problem;

*"namely to acquire or create a historical series of data that traces changes in the value of land parcels separate from the structures on them...Testing the rent gap thesis today will require an...historical approach and a comparable sensitivity to the constitution of place. Not all neighborhoods experiencing the rent gap may experience gentrification or redevelopment; some economic opportunities remain unexploited and specific local conditions may discourage the process" (Smith, 1987b:464).*



But, Ley argues that "within the built environment land value is never independent of an existing use". Ley argues that Smith's "devalorization cycle" includes implicit reference to actual house prices and rents, he cites Smith (1982:149);

*"for devalorization leads to physical decline, which in turn lowers the market price of the land on which the dilapidated buildings stand".*

For Ley the rent gap is not necessary for gentrification to occur, rather all that is needed is a potential for profit and the ability of gentrifiers to outbid existing or potential users for the desired inner-city areas. Ley also argues that most developers will not take that large a risk unless an area has proven itself (see Hamnett, 1991a:181). Duncan and Ley (1982) also argue that capital is more conservative than most structuralists would have us believe, and that inner-city reinvestment would appear to be too risky for entrepreneurs until market demand establishes itself.

Hamnett (1984a:305-306) likewise has problems with Smith's thesis:

*"Smith's attempt to develop a marxist analysis of gentrification based on the production and transformation of residential space by capital is severely flawed as a direct consequence of his marked antipathy towards all other forms of explanation which he erroneously relegates to the explanatory dustbin of preference. This severely constrains the potential explanatory power of his own approach which is focused exclusively on the structure and operation of the urban land and housing markets under capitalism..."*

In making the production of gentrified buildings the focus of his thesis Smith relegates alternative explanations, especially consumption explanations to secondary importance. Hamnett (1984a) further criticizes Smith for being unspecific as regards the forces of differentiation themselves and to the timing and incidence of gentrification. The rent gap thesis seems to ask more questions than it answers.

Firstly, it does not explain why some inner-city areas do not depreciate and deteriorate. Secondly, it does not state how wide the rent gap has to be for gentrification to occur. Thirdly, why reinvestment becomes gentrification rather than redevelopment is not explained. Fourthly, Smith is inconsistent as to whether gentrification is a necessary, probable or possible outcome of the created rent gap. Hamnett finds that Smith tends to indicate the latter, but still wants him to state why, when and where gentrification occurred. Hamnett argues that the timing of gentrification could be theorized more appropriately if demographic and other factors were not relegated to a "discredited consumer sovereignty" approach. With reference to the "where" or locational question, Smith asserts that gentrification will occur where the rent gap is greatest, in areas close to the city centre and where devalorization has near enough completed its cycle. But Hamnett (page 308) argues that this is not the case in London where,

*"gentrification has not been simply related to the age of the district and proximity to the city centre but to the existing pattern of high-status areas which have tended to expand outwards into surrounding lower status areas".*

I would add another criticism to Hamnett's list, namely that Smith does not go into any detail as to how the potential ground rent is manufactured.

Munt (1987:1177) criticizes the rent gap thesis on theoretical and empirical grounds. Like Hamnett, he argues that the rent gap stresses supply at the expense of demand. Why does Smith prioritize supply? Smith sees the supply of gentrifiable buildings as of more importance than demand variables because marxist methodology stresses the commodity as the starting point for any analysis, and this is situated in the sphere of

production, i.e. the supply category. Thus Smith is forced into arguing that production initiates gentrification more than consumer preference, "consumer preference" appears as mere "profit preference" (Smith, 1979a:540).

Clark (1988) analyzed the rent gap in Malmö, Sweden, and found Smith's thesis to be true, with the following stipulations. Firstly, the rent gap only arises after a relatively long time after the potential for it has been established. Therefore Smith's thesis is only relevant where there is a rapid increase in potential land rent and/or no attempt to adapt a building to changing urban circumstances. Thus the rent gap occurs quite early in the development cycle. Secondly, Clark argues that capitalized land rent rises rapidly, and the rent gap narrows rapidly, towards the end of the cycle when the property is being viewed in terms of reinvestment. In contrast, in Smith's version there is a continuous decline of the capitalized land rent. Clark considers this to be due to the ambiguous meaning which Smith gives to capitalized ground rent. Smith states that it is "the actual quantity of ground rent that is appropriated by the landowner, given the present use" (1979a:543). The common meaning of ground rent is "the valorization of future land rent income by the sale of land" (Clark, 1988:252). Smith's term is more akin to "actually realized annual land rent" which would decline until disinvestment is succeeded by reinvestment. Yet Clark sees that later Smith gets closer to the common meaning of the term when he argues that ground rent is capitalized when the building is sold and is therefore included in the price. Thus Clark's suggested model has a delayed split between potential and capitalized ground rent and a steep incline in the latter at the end of the cycle. Clark concludes,

*"the timing of building depreciation, rent gap expansion, steep rise in capitalized land rent, and finally redevelopment, depends on a myriad of circumstances and decisions which defy being structured into a mechanistic model"* (page 252).

Moreover, like Ley, Clark argues that human motivations are just as promising a line of research,

*"...the action of agents with economic or political interests, and of individuals interested in their own housing, are essential to the particular histories which unfold in a place"* (Clark, 1988:244).

Badcock (1989) studied the rent gap in Adelaide, Australia, to discover that a rent gap had emerged by 1970 in the inner-city and in some areas of the suburbs, and that gentrification had occurred in these areas. Yet he asserts that gentrification is not the direct response to the rent gap that Smith supposes, rather gentrification is seen as a "sub-optimal investment strategy" by capital. Badcock also argues that the state government and the city are more potent in the development of gentrification than Smith's connection of gentrification to crisis conditions in the national/regional economy.

It seems then that the rent gap alone is an insufficient explanation of gentrification, but rather a combination of the conditions the rent gap lays down, private motivations and government intervention instigate the process.

Hamnett and Randolph (1984,1986) offer an alternative theorization of uneven development and gentrification in the form of their value gap. Hamnett and Randolph start their analysis with the production of housing as a commodity within a

structuralist framework. But where Smith (1979a) developed his rent gap thesis based on United States' cities, Hamnett and Randolph (1984,1986) develop their thesis based on the London property market. They advance an explanatory framework which analyses the flat break-up market (from private rent to owner occupation) in central London in terms of the changing fiscal and financial aspects of C20th landlordism. They realize the development of a value gap in the relationship between "tenanted investment value" (T.I.) and "vacant possession value" (V.P.). The former is a measure of the rented building's annual rental income, the latter is a measure of the property's future sale price when it is converted into owner occupation. The values of both are often similar, but when demand for owner occupied housing increases the gap between the two widens, especially if rent controls prevent landlords from increasing rents. When the gap widens sufficiently tenurial transformation occurs, as the landlord sells off rented property into owner occupation.

Rent gaps are especially place specific and refer to single properties and the "neighbourhood effect" is relevant here. Value gaps on the other hand are more generalizable over space as government policy and economics affect tenure forms in a city or region (Clark, 1991b:21). In an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of both theories Clark (1991a,1991b) merged both ideas. The rent gap is criticized for its insensitivity to alternative forms of tenure and the value gap for failing to distinguish between building value and capitalized land rent. Yet I would also argue that the

value gap is insensitive to other forms of tenure, for example, a owner occupied building that is gentrified.

Now I want to turn from looking at accumulation in marxist analyses of gentrification to the other consideration, that of class and class struggle. For in marxist analyses of gentrification accumulation is seen as the driving force of the bourgeois class, and class struggle can result when the bourgeois gentrify a neighbourhood.

### **2.2.2 Class Analyses**

Analyses of class and class struggle reveal the class structure of capitalist society, i.e. capital's domination of labour (see Harvey, 1981:91).

#### **2.2.2.1 Class**

Despite the references to class in the gentrification literature, Munt (1987) is critical of the relegation of class to a secondary position in gentrification studies. Indeed Williams (1984) feels that stressing social class would give marxist theory some element of human agency.

The marxian concept of class is defined in relation to the mode of production. Social classes emerged because of the social division of labour which occurred as the means of production became privately owned. Therefore private property (material value) causes class divisions in society. In its pure and most rigid form marxist class analysis

is based on a two-class model, the proletariat being dependent on the bourgeoisie, the owners and controllers of capital. Class division has an economic and political dimension, Badcock (1984:64) argues that a proper marxian analysis of class

*"is obliged not only to show how they are defined in terms of their relation to the means of production, but also to show how they are structured by ideological disposition, by patterns of political action, by institutions of power and property, and by the policies of the state".*

Smith (1987c:161) argues that the marxist two-class model is more valuable for looking at capitalism as a whole and less valuable for an analysis of gentrification:

*"The two-class model of classical marxism does give us considerable insight into capitalism as a whole, but as a tool for comprehending specific experiences of social and political change, it must be refined considerably...For examining the gentrification of a neighborhood the two-class model would have the effectiveness of a chain saw for wood carving. Not that the two-class model is intrinsically blunt; it is necessary for cutting and shaping the block out of which our more intricate carve of gentrification can be fashioned...Just as the two-class model cannot cut the sharp outlines of gentrification, the intricate, more refined, and more contingent tools of class analysis appropriate for portraying gentrification in a given locality are ineffective for explaining the larger historical and theoretical patterns of capitalist society. They would be as nail files to a forest".*

One of the problems with retaining marxist class analysis is that a marxist class is recognised on the basis of its relationship to the means of production. Therefore certain social groups do not qualify as a class, for example, the intelligentsia is not a class because it has no relationship of its own to the means of production. This becomes especially problematic when theorizing the new middle class, because many of these can be characterized as intelligentsia. But Smith (1987c) criticizes people's misconceptions of the rigidity of marxist class analysis, condemning this as "perverse empiricist literalism". Smith prefers Wright's (1978) notion of people occupying "contradictory class positions", because for Smith classes are "fuzzy" categories



defined by social, economic, political and ideological conditions. But I would argue that this contradicts his preference for Wright's class analysis, for in assuring the formation of contradictory class positions surely classes must be watertight and not fuzzy categories.

Smith sets out to establish whether gentrification is caused by the rise of the new middle class. He traces their formation to the turn of the century:

*"According to the historian Wiebe (1967:111-132), this group of urban professionals, experts, and managers experienced a 'revolution in identity' as the specialized needs of the emerging urban industrial system gave them an increasingly prominent social role" (Smith, 1987c:152).*

Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1979) argue why it is a "new" middle class:

*"unlike the old middle class...the professional managerial class was not independent of the capital-labor relation but was employed by capital for the purpose of controlling, managing, and administering to the working class" (Smith, 1987c:153).*

Smith concludes by arguing that gentrification and the mode of consumption are integral parts of class constitution. He wants to relate social restructuring to the economic and spatial restructuring which is associated with it. Overall despite accepting the emergence of a new middle class and its role in gentrification, Smith reverts back to a two-class model, when he argues that the overall result is an increasingly polarized city (page 170).

Badcock (1984:166) argues that we need to analyze the winners and losers in the inner-city housing market in class terms. Like Smith, Badcock sees the limitations of the marxist two-class model, for there are important intra-class differences with



respect to the consumption of property. Badcock argues that inequality is rooted in the structure of the labour market in advanced capitalism and that land and housing markets reproduce these inequalities (page 169).

#### **2.2.2.2 Class Struggle**

Marxist analyses of class argue that the struggle between common class interests has been a determinant of humankind's development. To understand marxian class struggle we must understand the social relations that created the tension. Yet social relations under the capitalist mode of production are masked by what marxists have described as a fetish: the myth/ideology of individualism disguises the fact that our lives are dependent on those of others and we have little knowledge of the trials and tribulations of those other lives. Marxist theory wants to remove the fetish so that we gain access to the underlying social relations.

Perhaps one of the most interesting analyses of class struggle associated with the gentrification process has been undertaken by Smith (1990). Smith analyzes the class struggle encapsulated in the Tompkins Square riots, which occurred in 1988 during the gentrification of the Lower East Side in Manhattan, New York City. Smith studies a form of class war, associated with gentrification in the area. The class struggle in terms of the riot becomes for Smith an expression of the power relations between the City who wanted to tame the park to facilitate gentrification in the area and the local homeless population who slept in the park (see also Lees, 1989). What was essentially an anti-gentrification rally turned into a riot, when according to Smith, the

"bourgeoisie" responded by enlisting the police into the area, who mounted baton charges and "cossack-like" rampages against the assembled locals. Smith uses political and economic polarization to define the marxist two class struggle, increases in poverty are juxtaposed with increases in wealth. The spatial location of the Lower East Side adjacent to wealthy areas is argued to increase this sense of polarization. On the other hand Engels (1845) in "The Condition of the Working Class in England" observed that the potential for class consciousness was obfuscated by the residential segregation of different types of worker. But C19th Manchester is not C20th New York and class consciousness can emerge when classes are able to identify each other and recognize the inequalities between them. Smith locates the Lower East Side adjacent to areas of high profiled wealth. In C20th New York City wealth as cultural appropriation has become in many ways a spectacle, inequality is blatantly obvious, facilitating a class conscious response in terms of the riot. In a rendition of good versus evil, the locals are the goodies, and yuppies, property developers, realtors and the City are the baddies. So despite Smith's earlier claims that the marxist two-class model needs to be refined in analyses of gentrification, in his 1990 paper he characterizes the class struggle in terms of a unrefined two-class model. In this Smith reverts back to an earlier conceptualization of class (Smith and LeFaivre, 1984) in which a marxist two-class model is discussed in terms of a division between the benefits and costs of gentrification. Those who benefit are the capitalist class and the middle class, and the costs of gentrification are paid by those who are displaced (page 54). Smith's illustration of class struggle in Manhattan assumes a class consistent response. This is contradicted by Bridge's (1991) analysis of class and residence in

west London. Bridge found a lack of class consistent response to neighbourhood change in terms of gentrification. This he saw not as an example of class de-alignment taking place, for active class based networks still existed, rather that the neighbourhood is not the "critical site of class reproduction". I would argue that the neighbourhood as a site of class reproduction and struggle is context specific and this is why Smith (1990) finds class consistent responses, whilst Bridge (1991) does not. The importance of contextuality is emphasized later in this chapter.

It is evident from a brief review of marxist analyses of gentrification that the unidimensionality of the theory provides insufficient explanation. For example, the rent gap, an example of uneven development theory which emphasizes production and economically determined structural processes, neglects to consider human motivations which are important for the process of gentrification. Likewise in marxist analyses of class, human agency has little input, classes are seen as politico-economic rather than cultural divisions in society.

I turn now to consider postmodernist analyses of gentrification. I consider the difference between marxist and postmodernist explanations, and whether postmodernist explanations of gentrification are sufficient by themselves.

### **2.3 Postmodernist Analyses of Gentrification**

Postmodernist analysis entered geography in the 1980s, drawing on French social and cultural theory. Postmodernist analyses of gentrification are usually presented as

being different from marxist analyses of gentrification. In this section I argue that this difference is nowhere near as sharp as the gentrification literature would have us believe. Perhaps the reason for the tendency to polarize marxist and postmodernist analyses relates to misconceptions about the terms "postmodernist" and "postmodernism".

Cloke, Philo and Sadler (1991) divide postmodern geography into two types. They associate one type with those authors who identify "postmodernity and the postmodern" as an **object** of study, and who focus on social, political and cultural processes in the late C20th. This type of postmodern geography has roots in marxism, humanism, realism and structuration theory. Graham (1988:60-61) argues that **"Postmodernism can be unquestionably marxist or militantly anti-marxist"**<sup>7</sup>. Cloke et al. (1991) associate the second type of postmodern geography with those geographers concerned with "postmodernism" as an **attitude** that informs how we interpret the world in terms of theory and methodology.

In the analysis of gentrification most geographers have tended to focus on postmodernity and the postmodern as objects of study. For example, Ley (1989) examines postmodern architecture as an object of study, which he argues is sensitive

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<sup>7</sup> Postmodernism's categorization is made more difficult by the fact that it can also be conceived of in post-marxist or neo-marxist terms (Lees, 1994b). This is in part due to the complications between considerations of postmodernism as an attitude and postmodernity as an object. The post-marxists put postmodernism first and justify it with a range of arguments, they conclude that Marx himself was also intellectually flexible, that he rejected truth and finality. Neo-marxists maintain a close identity with hegelian marxism, using postmodernism to reinvigorate marxism (Rosenau, 1992:160-161).

to a "human scale" and therefore to place. Similarly, Mills' (1988) study of Fairview Slopes, Vancouver, treats the landscape as an object that may be described as postmodern. With minor exceptions, commentators such as these have not undertaken analyses that use the theoretical or methodological positions associated with an attitude of postmodernism. The dichotomy between marxist and postmodernist analyses of gentrification is a product of this tendency to treat the postmodern as an object, rather than to adopt an attitude of postmodernism.

In this section, I summarize the theoretical or methodological positions associated with an attitude of postmodernism, as quite different from marxism, and then I go on to show how the gentrification literature has in the main not adopted these attitudes. I want to show how the gentrification literature treats the postmodern as an object of study and how authors cling to marxism and humanism rather than investigating postmodernism as an attitude.

### **2.3.1 Postmodernism as an Attitude**

According to Graham (1988:60-61) postmodernism;

*"...gives us fragments where there was wholeness, change where there was stasis, openendedness and pastiche where we once had formal closure and underlying relations of depth. Most appealingly, it gives us the 'ineluctability of difference' (Bove 1986) rather than the search for sameness in a structured world...It can be serious about social issues or frivolous and individualistic".*

In general terms postmodernism as a set of values and attitudes celebrates chaos, discontinuity, disjunction, fragmentation and difference. It rejects totality, holism, meta-narrative or grand theory, the search for the truth, uni-dimensionality and



structure. Postmodernism defines in terms of text and tries to find meaning in the text, it offers interpretation not findings and does not agree to testing for this refers to an ultimate truth or solution which postmodernists resist. Truth is rejected as a modernist conceptualization. Logic, order and reason are rejected within it. Lyotard (1984) argues that performance overrides truth, and that power is the ultimate goal of knowledge. Postmodernism's questioning of the meaning of truth and reality is inspired by Nietzsche and Heidegger. This kind of nihilistic attitude to the foundations of security in life is expressed clearly in Baudrillard's postmodern position:

*"If being nihilist is to privilege this point of inertia and the analysis of this irreversibility of systems to the point of no return, then I am a nihilist. If being a nihilist is to be obsessed with the mode of disappearance, and no longer with the mode of production, then I am a nihilist. Disappearance, aphanisis, implosion, Fury of the Verschwindens" (Baudrillard, 1984:39).*

Somewhat melancholic, Baudrillard asks what can we do, he sees the answer in postmodernity, in being able to survive amongst what is left. Sceptical postmodernism aims to destabilize. It offers no insights, no consistent arguments, it is nihilistic in the extreme. Pessimism and despair are all on offer. Nothing is worthy of commitment, with no truth, all that is left are plays on meaning (see Derrida, 1979; Foucault, 1980; Lyotard, 1984). It awaits the apocalypse. The nihilism is a symptom and reaction to the end of modernity and the superficiality and eventual demise of postmodernity.

Affirmative postmodernists follow the sceptics view of modernity, but manage to attain some optimism for postmodernity (see Jameson, 1984; Dear, 1986; Soja, 1989). They either believe in positive political action or are satisfied merely to

"celebrate". Unlike the sceptics they find some choices superior to others, and therefore are able to act.

Deconstruction is one form of methodology in postmodernism (see Derrida, [1967]1974). The goal of deconstruction is to open up all constructions, to reveal contradictions and assumptions, but its intention is not to improve or revise (Rosenau, 1992:xi). Deconstruction tries to expose and to resituate hierarchies inherent in polar opposites and the tension therein, but nothing is resolved. Marxist dialectics and postmodernist deconstruction are incompatible, for in marxist dialectical reasoning a synthesis is attained, but in deconstruction a third category is not aspired to (Rosenau, 1992:159).

Harvey (1989b:115), annoyed by postmodernism's claim to disjunction and fragmentation, asserts that Marx and other marxists also consider the latter but that postmodernist polemics have caricatured it out of existence. Harvey's main criticism of postmodernism is that because of its concentration on ephemerality, and fragmentation, we move beyond the point where there is a coherent set of politics. Thus he allies postmodernism to neo-conservatism (see Harvey, 1989b:116). Thus with postmodernism marxist class struggle is fragmented and there is no strong base for the working class to develop their political power. Harvey is here revealing his modernist sympathies, it may no longer be realistic to assert the working class politically as the group with utopian potential. For postmodernity has seen a shift from a large working class to an expanded "new middle class" and an increasing



"under class", none of which have the revolutionary potential of the modernist conception of the working class as Marx and Engels conceived of it.

I want now to return to the idea that the dichotomy between marxist and postmodernist work on gentrification is over emphasized, in that postmodernist work focuses on postmodernity as an object, and in general does not adopt the attitudes of postmodernism.

### **2.3.2 Postmodernity as an Object: Periodization**

The division between postmodernist literature which develops postmodernism as an attitude and that which looks at postmodernity as an object can be seen in the theorizations of the transition to postmodernity.

Some authors, for example, Baudrillard (1983), adopt an anti-meta-narrative stance and theorize a radical break from one social/economic/cultural form to another. Baudrillard argues that we have come to the end of modernity, the era concerned with production and industrial capitalism. We have instead entered post-industrial postmodernity, a period dominated by hyperreality, simulations, new forms of technology, culture and society. Baudrillard adopts postmodernism's attitude; boundaries between all binary oppositions implode, for example, between high and low culture, appearance and reality. And thus traditional social theorizations themselves are no-longer relevant. Therefore Baudrillard looks at postmodernism as an attitude.

Jameson (1984) on the other hand theorizes postmodernism as the "cultural logic of late capitalism", a new socio-economic stage in capitalism. Jameson draws on Mandel (1975) for a marxian alternative to non-marxist or anti-marxist theories of "consumer" or "postindustrial" society, such as that expressed by Baudrillard. He concludes that postmodernity is an even purer form of capitalism than that discussed by Marx and Lenin. For Jameson the 1960s contain the emergence of postmodernity in the rupture between capitalism and culture. He seeks to reveal a "constitutive" relationship between cultural postmodernism, the new technologies and multinational capitalism. Jameson then discusses postmodernity as an object of study.

Davis (1985:108) criticizes Jameson's thesis. Where Jameson argues that postmodernity arose in the 1960s, Davis argues:

*"'Modernism', at least in architecture, remained the functional aesthetic of Late Capitalism, and the sixties must be seen as a predominantly fin-de-siecle decade, more a culmination than a beginning".*

Davis (1985:107) argues that Jameson's thesis falls short because in his usage of a neo-marxian framework, detail is homogenized and too many contradictory phenomena are subsumed under a unitary concept. For example he does not provide a detailed narrative of the transition from Marx and Lenin's stages of capitalism. While some on the left criticize him for his concessions to postmodernism (see Kellner, 1988:259, Rosenau, 1992:162, footnote 26). Jameson is criticized from the stance of postmodernism as an attitude for his retention of the meta-narrative:

*"Obviously, Jameson wishes to preserve Marxism as the Master Narrative and to relativize all competing theories as sectoral or regional theories to be subsumed in*

*their proper place within the Marxian Master Narrative...Furthermore, Jameson wants to hold onto fundamental distinctions between social classes, base/superstructure, Left/Right, Progressive/Reactionary, etc. etc. that Baudrillard and other postmodernists claim have been imploded (Kellner, 1988:262).*

Like Jameson (1984), Harvey (1989a,1989b) also argues that postmodernism and post-fordism can be interpreted through marxist theorization as a feature of the capitalist mode of production. For flexible accumulation (capitalism's push towards increased flexibility and geographical mobility since the 1970s) is still enclosed within three necessary conditions of the capitalist mode of production (Harvey, 1989b:180): 1. capitalism is growth orientated, 2. growth in real values rests on the exploitation of living labour in production, and, 3. capitalism is necessarily technologically and organizationally dynamic. Harvey (1989b:191) considers that capitalism's path towards flexibility has been taken before and that Marx's "Capital" backs this point up. He concludes that there is a continuity between modernism and postmodernism, and argues that postmodernism is a window of crisis in modernism. Harvey (1989b:336) concludes that: "It is never easy to construct a critical assessment of a condition that is overwhelmingly present". For Harvey the cultural phenomenon of postmodernism is merely a social and political condition occurring due to the continuing development of capitalism.

Soja (1987,1989) argues that postmodern and postfordist geographies are due to the long wave in successive eras of capitalist development, like Harvey and Jameson he also constructs a meta-narrative "the totalizing aleph" (1989:248). Soja sees

postmodernity as another part of the restructuring of modernity, he clings to a marxian base while attempting to inform it with postmodernisms (1989:5).

In Albertsen's (1988) work, postmodernity equals postfordism. To conceptualize cultural and economic change in society, Albertsen places postmodern culture within the rhetoric of post-fordism, which developed from fordism. High-modernism was high-fordism's culture, "explosive" postmodernism emerged as an oppositional culture when high-fordism was still flowering in the 1960s. High-modernism declined and "implosive" postmodernism arrived in the late-fordist 1970s, emerging as "the culture of the establishment" in the first half of the post-fordist 1980s.

Lash (1990b:33) argues that postmodernism is a cultural paradigm, post-industrialism is not a part of postmodernism, but rather is in a relationship of compatibility with it. Where modernization is characterized by cultural differentiation, postmodernism is characterized by de-differentiation which causes chaos, flimsiness and instability. Lash's view is that cultural paradigms are themselves dependent on material factors, such as capital accumulation and class formation and fragmentation, but he asserts that these cultural factors, once established, play an important role in structuring urban space. As such Lash theorizes from a marxian base.

Postmodernist writers on gentrification tend to analyze the process as a symptom of postmodernity in a manner more akin to Jameson, Harvey, Soja, Albertsen and Lash, than to Baudrillard. As such they do not adopt attitudes from postmodernism, but

attitudes from modernist theories such as marxism and humanism. This is clear in their periodization of postmodernity, for example Ley (1980,1987a) seems to draw on both marxism and humanism in his analysis of the transition to postmodernity. He draws on Bell's (1973) neo-marxist work, which roots cultural changes in the economic restructuring associated with post-industrialism. He also draws on Habermas (1970) to look at the tensions between modernist and postmodernist societies, between C19th notions of capital and labour and the C20th new middle class. He discusses the creative systems of thought through which the new middle classes try to build new social, political and cultural forms in postmodernity, expressing his humanist leanings.

Ley (1987a:40) distinguishes between modernity and postmodernity as follows;

*"modernism from the 1910s to the 1960s has responded to the challenge of establishing social order for a mass society; post-modernism since the 1960s has responded to the challenge of placelessness and a need for urban community".*

In "Liberal Ideology and the Post-industrial City" (1980), he reveals the relationship between post-industrialism and a new ideology of urban development which is concerned with the quality of life and a new liberalism seen through consumption styles. Ley looks at gentrification as a function of postmodernity. To understand the changing urban landscape, Ley argues we must understand changes in society. He focuses on three elements; economics, politics and culture. Economic change includes reference to the production process and the transformation of the labour force. Political change includes the active role of government in post-industrial society, where decision making permeates both the market and the political arena, and interest

groups which have been politicized challenge the business lobby in political decision making. In terms of culture Ley asserts that individuality (a particular feature of his humanist leanings) has been reasserted and the service class enacts an aesthetic philosophy of life. The service class is important in Ley's thoughts on post-industrial society and on gentrification, for property activity is seen to be stimulated by the market power of the growing white collar workers who are a product of a different type of economy under postmodernity.

Ley (1986 and 1987a) considers the new middle class as both patron and client of postmodernism. Likewise for Mills (1988:186) "the New Class plays an ambiguous part as both the exploiter and the exploited". Ley (1980:243) provides a summary of what characterizes this class of professional white collar workers; the younger members are socially if not politically liberal, and have a multiple of life goals, self fulfilment in career terms is more important than the job itself. The new class are representatives of the arts and the soft professions who in the 1960s believed in the oppositional ideals of counter-culture. But in the 1970s and 1980s hippies became yuppified,

*"as the subjective philosophies of phenomenology and existentialism which opposed the impersonality of modernism in the 1960s and redeemed the individual have been directed inwards, and the celebration of meaning has often shifted subtly to aestheticism, and the celebration of the meaning of self"* (Lasch 1978, cited by Ley, 1989:57-58).

Thus "youthful" liberalism has been replaced by "older" conservatism in the cultural transition from modernity to postmodernity. The lifestyle of this new class is consumption based (there are similarities with Veblen's [1953] leisure class), status

and pursuit of self-actualization are the main goals. Ley (1989:57) later categorizes between early gentrifiers and late gentrifiers as subsets of the new middle class in terms of cultural ethos;

*"initial entrants into these districts commonly have left-liberal sympathies and endorse the sentiment of social difference, but as the process unfolds and prices inflate a more conservative ethos often takes hold".*

Caulfield (1989) likewise distinguishes between early and late gentrifiers, the former he names "marginal gentrifiers", for whom gentrification is an emancipatory practice. Ley and Caulfield relate these class changes to the transition from modernity to postmodernity.

I agree with Hamnett (1991a:177) when he argues that from a marxist perspective Ley's thesis is negated on a number of general counts. The emphasis on culture and consumption, the acceptance of post-industrialism, the political power given to the new elite and the small emphasis on the production of the built environment and labour and capital all suggest Ley refutes marxism. But Hamnett reminds us that Ley's thesis is not non-materialist or consumption based as this would have us believe, for the strength of Ley's work rests on the importance given to culture and consumption in the post-industrial city, which is

*"rooted in the deeper changes in the structure of production, the changing division of labour, and the rise of a locationally concentrated service class".*

This provides one example of the falseness of the dichotomy between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification which I mentioned earlier.



These postmodernist writers talk of postmodernity in quite modernist terms, in the main because they have not adopted the values and attitudes of postmodernism. As such they translate cultural changes through economic changes, agency through structure, consumption through production. Due to this there are many complementarities between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification. Indeed how different is their work from Harvey's (1989b) "The Condition of Postmodernity", despite the protest from some that they are anti-meta-narrative. For Harvey also argues that the cultural change associated with postmodernity is rooted in economic restructuring, it is capital's response to a crisis condition in capitalism, one which is attempting more innovative strategies of accumulation;

*"precisely because capitalism is expansionary and imperialistic, cultural life in more and more areas gets brought within the grasp of the cash nexus and the logic of capital circulation"* (Harvey, 1989b:344).

I have shown some of the ways in which postmodernist writers on gentrification and the urban process have theorized the transition from modernity to postmodernity. Now I want to turn to look at the postmodern as a style in terms of the architecture, landscapes and lifestyles associated with gentrification.

### **2.3.3 Postmodernity as an Object: Style**

When writers on gentrification have considered the postmodern style associated with gentrification the conflict between looking at postmodernity as an object and postmodernism as an attitude is also apparent.

Jameson (1984) discusses some of the most important features of postmodernism as a style. He talks of the significance of pastiche which involves the whimsical imitation or mimicry of other styles, especially their mannerisms and idiosyncracies. He argues that pastiche is manifested in the form of a

*"stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practise of such mimicry without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody..."* (Jameson in Foster, 1985:114).

Pastiche gives the sense of a world where innovation is impossible and thus all that is left is to immitate old styles, and kitsch imitation becomes more relevant than authenticity. Similar notions had earlier been mentioned by Bell (1976:13-14):

*"Modern culture is defined by this extraordinary freedom to ransack the world storehouse and to engorge any and every style it comes upon. Such freedom comes from the fact that the axial principle of modern culture is the expression and remaking of the 'self' in order to achieve self-realization and self-fulfilment. And in its search, there is a denial of any limits or boundaries to experience. It is a reaching out for all experience; nothing is forbidden, all is to be explored".*

Featherstone (1987:57) combines culture and economics in his consideration of the concept of consumer culture. This involves a dual focus; firstly, on the cultural dimension of the economy, and secondly, on the economy of cultural goods. The adoption of a "lifestyle" in consumer culture is an all important display of style and individuality which come together in a specific design. Featherstone argues that it is the logic of capitalism which has pushed lifestyle to such a prominent position, revealing his marxist leanings. He argues that it is important to look at the social processes which structure taste in consumer goods and lifestyles, and to raise the question of;

*"whether the concern for style and individuality itself reflect more the predispositions of a particular class fraction concerned with legitimating its own particular constellation of tastes as the tastes of the social, rather than the actual social itself"* (Featherstone, 1987:60).

Ley's work on gentrification identifies the architectural style of the postmodern landscape as an object of study. Ley (1987a:40) argues:

*"The modern movement in architecture and planning projects a functional and universal rationality to space; in contrast, post-modern currents pose a more personal and contextual design solution".*

Ley offers an anti-grand theory position related to his concern with the human scale in postmodern architecture - "human proportions", "pedestrian", "personalize the built form" (page 47), but this reflects his humanist background not his postmodernist attitude. He is concerned with the difference between the style of a landscape produced in an era of liberal design and planning which was dominated by the values of the new middle class, and the style of a landscape produced later by new right legislators. Ley uses the two different redeveloped landscapes to illustrate how people's ideas and interests relate to the architectural styles:

*"False Creek, and especially Granville Island, is a landscape for a lifestyle, the lifestyle of the new middle class, particularly those in the expressive professions"* (Ley, 1987a:48).

Ley's (1987a,1988) emphasis on human agency is exemplified by his interest in aesthetic lifestyles and associates him with the liberal humanist tradition.

Mills' (1988) work also displays humanist leanings in an analysis of the postmodern landscape of gentrification; "the landscape as a whole is expressive of the humanistic face of postmodernism" (page 175). Mills looks at the changing meaning of the inner



city associated with the process of gentrification, extending the argument so that it includes cultural change as well as production and reproduction. She focuses on the postmodern landscape of gentrification and its associations with the lifestyle of the new middle class, human agency is stressed at all times:

*"It is useful to collapse the distinction between architecture alone and the broader concept of the landscape shaped by human effort, and to focus in interpretation on the latter"* (page 174).

Mills argues that the rise of the new middle class is implicated in labour force restructuring related to economic change, she leans here towards marxism, for example, she talks about the polarized labour market. This is evident in her use of Bell's (1973) work (see pages 182-183). The production of gentrifiers is then related to the consumption style and lifestyle of gentrifiers. A consideration of style raises for Mills the issue of class in relation to culture. She looks at this relationship without adopting the values and attitudes of postmodernism, in fact she turns them over, she stabilizes them, and emphasizes human agency:

*"What is possible, however, is to focus on those points where free-floating images do come to rest, where they are fixed into a new system which, at least temporarily, is reproducible. Because that grounding of images is performed by actors in the process of social interaction, we can trace meaning - not by digging behind each image to lay bare its significance, but rather by looking across to its new conjuncture with other images. And we can ask, what (say) has an interpenetration of folk and classical illusions been made to do by these people at this time and in this place?"* (Mills, 1988:184).

Mills gives the new middle class agency in terms of the styles which they adopt associated with gentrification. The architectural and aesthetic styles associated with gentrification are seen by Mills (1988), to be a positive response to the nihilism of a postmodern world. Nihilism is the emptiness due to a lack of reality and indeed too

much reality in postmodernity. The response is an attempt to recreate a reality stolen from past realities, from past cultures. This return to past cultures is seen in the new middle class' symbolic usage of period architecture and cultural remnants. A return to past cultures grasps the meanings and values which were created in past societies, the optimism and achievement which the new culture is unable to produce (relating to Jameson's pastiche). A return to history is seen as legitimizing the conspicuous consumption of the gentrified building. The lifestyle of the new middle class stresses the conspicuous consumption of quality goods and experiences, what Veblen (1953) calls "cultivation of the aesthetic faculty" (Mills, 1988:181).

Another response to nihilism in postmodernity, has been "the spectacle". Following Debord (1973),

*"the entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production reign announces itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles".*

Debord's "spectacle" is the ideology of economic production made material, revealing the mastery of production, consumption and consciousness in one. The spectacle makes manifest the power of commodity relations and the instrument of hegemonic consciousness, therein it fosters class inequality, it negates "real life", and creates unreality through the construction of deceptive signs and images (see Ley, 1988:194). The spectacle signifies high modernism and the demise of modernism. Modernism has created a culture of consumption where reality has imploded "into a dense, seductive, and entirely nihilistic society of signs" (Levin and Kroker 1984:10, cited by Ley, 1988:194). The individual and society are seen to consume these signs, and in their

ability to delude the consumers, the image makers gain control. But Ley does not believe in the scenario of the passive, deluded consumer being controlled by the power-brokers/image makers, here Ley stresses the power of human agency. He discusses Laba (1986) and Martin (1981) who argue that the view of mass culture as manipulator homogenizes the product and the consumer (page 195). In reducing them to a state of passivity, culture as a process is not considered, and culture as a form of active negotiation is not considered either. Mass culture as manipulator ignores the fact that style can be created independent of the culture industry by individuals.

In this world of signs, manipulations and confusing realities, it is not surprising that Mills (1988:185) comments on the ambiguity associated with being a member of the new middle class;

*"...as postmodern architecture is typified by ambiguity, so too are its New Class champions. One response to an ambiguous social position is to try to pin it down through some clever 'work' with objects and events which symbolize social categories. This involves associating oneself with some 'things', disassociating oneself from other 'things' - the meanings of which are constantly in flux".*

She relates this active human agency to Jager's (1986) notion of "Victoriana", seeing the new class as jockeying for a position in the sphere of consumption, the sphere where style is the ultimate signifier. Through gentrification, buying into history not only gives a sense of security and a connection with cultural heritage, it also revives the symbolism of conspicuous consumption as seen in the decorative excesses of Victoriana (Mills 1988:185).



Jager (1986:79) likewise relates architectural aesthetics to class constitution and human agency;

*"urban conservation is the production of social differentiation; it is one mechanism, through which social differences are turned into social distinctions".*

Following Baudrillard (1981), Jager asks which class are gentrifiers differentiating themselves from, and which social position or class model are they aspiring to? To comprehend this he looks at what characterizes the middle class. Jager argues that the new middle class is an ambiguous one. Reading Elias (1974:302) Jager sees that a double-sided war is being conducted, the middle classes must attain some semblance of an identity whilst being squeezed from above and below by the upper and the lower classes. This conflict and tension is to be seen in the architecture of gentrification, external façadal display denotes "candidature" for the dominant class (the bourgeoisie), whilst internal renovations attempt to distance the middle class from the lower orders (the proletariat). Thus the aesthetic style of gentrification defines a new attempt at a mode of distinction from the higher and the lower orders. Yet the mode of distinction needs to be legitimized. Jager quotes Baudrillard (1981:43):

*"The taste for the bygone is characterized by the desire to transcend the dimension of economic success, to consecrate a social success or a privileged position in a redundant, culturalized, symbolic sign. The bygone is, among other things, social success that seeks a legitimacy, a heredity, a 'noble' sanction".*

Appearances in terms of taste and aesthetic preference denote social distinction, Harvey (1989b:77) sees this as a form of capital accumulation and as the production and consumption of Bourdieu's "symbolic capital". He states that the symbolic form of capital is a marxian fetish and conceals the fact that it originates from material forms of capital. Harvey sees the fetish as a deliberate attempt to conceal the reality



of economic distinction by manifesting itself in culture and taste (see pages 77-78). Hamnett also (1984a:311) argues that the social trends inherent in the gentrification process can be interpreted as "crucial material changes". The introduction of symbolism and of aesthetics into commodity production could be seen as yet another feature of capitalist accumulation. For the purposes of profit maximization, capital grasps the novelty value found in a commodity's aesthetic value and symbolic value. Smith's (1987c) notion of capitalist accumulation through product differentiation is one such example. The latter he sees as an extension of the "ethic of consumption" which the working class grasped during suburbanization, the difference being that the new middle class are able to consume products which the working class are unable to consume. Thus we have product differentiation related to social and cultural status and income capability. These structural accounts can be compared to Mills' more humanistic account:

*"From the culturally constituted world, meaning is transferred into consumer goods; the fashion and advertizing systems are two strategies by which this is achieved. Then individuals draw that meaning from the goods by various rituals, including those of possession, exchange and grooming" (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981; McCracken 1986, cited by Mills, 1988:170).*

I have shown then that for the main part postmodernist analyses of gentrification and the urban process do not adopt the attitudes of postmodernism, but tend to fall back on investigating postmodernity through modernist theories such as marxism and humanism. Now I want to turn to those explanations which have attempted to combine economic and cultural explanation and to criticize them firstly, for

prioritizing either economics or culture in their explanation; and secondly, for their neglect of the values and attitudes of postmodernism.

## **2.4 Eclectic Approaches in the Analysis of Gentrification**

There has been a specific thread which has run through the gentrification literature (see Smith and Herod, 1991, for a comprehensive bibliography) since its early days, that is, the advocacy of multiple interpretations of gentrification and an increased awareness of, and sensitivity towards, alternative explanations. In this section I illustrate the development of more eclectic investigations into gentrification. My main criticism of these analyses is that they usually revert back to prioritizing one set of ideas over another, as such they revert back to offering the singular theoretical statements which they set out to counteract. In Chapter 3, I then offer a tentative way of moving beyond this dilemma by adopting some of the attitudes and values associated with postmodernism.

### **2.4.1 Early Attempts**

The first phase of the gentrification literature from the 1960s to the late 1970s<sup>8</sup>, was empirically based and tended to ask questions not unlike those seen in factorial analysis. In the second phase of the gentrification literature, from the late 1970s to mid-1980s<sup>9</sup>, writers began to theorize the process.

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<sup>8</sup> See Jacobs, 1961; Glass, 1964,1973; Milner Holland Report, 1965; Berry, 1973; Hamnett, 1973; Molotch, 1976; Williams, 1976; Clay, 1979; Gale, 1979.

<sup>9</sup> See Smith, 1979a,1979b; Hamnett and Williams, 1979,1980; Allen, 1980; Berry, 1980; Henig, 1980; Laska and Spain, 1980; Holcomb and Beauregard, 1981; Ley, 1981; Zukin, 1982[1988];

Zukin (1982[1988]) was one of the first authors to be sensitive to other explanations of gentrification, "so must every attempt to understand the reshaping of cities incorporate a multidimensional social perspective" (1982[1988]:203). One of the most prominent pieces of work from this period, Zukin's book "Loft Living", marked a turning point in the gentrification literature in its recognition of the absence of culture in politico-economic theorizations of gentrification. To understand loft living Zukin needed an explanation which would include culture and capital, art and industry. Revealing the working together of culture and capital in the gentrification process was unconventional at this time because work undertaken in the tradition of marxian historical materialism generally subsumed culture<sup>10</sup>. In much marxism, culture is ideology, it reflects a substructure and has no autonomy of its own.

Zukin's framework for looking at gentrification consists of two foci: Firstly, in analyzing the structural characteristics of the capitalist economy she focuses on deindustrialization; the decline of manufacturing, near fiscal collapse and the emergence of a service economy in which the arts play a particular role. Real estate trends are studied, as are features of capital accumulation and the gameplay of New

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DeGiovanni, 1983; Hamnett, 1984a,b,c; Hamnett and Randolph, 1984; Molotch and Logan, 1984; Palen and London, 1984; Rose, 1984; Jackson, 1985; Maher et al., 1985.

<sup>10</sup> One exception being Raymond Williams (1977,1979,1980) who developed the concept of cultural materialism, emerging from Gramsci's stress on the cultural dimension of politics in capitalist societies which are organized through consent, not coercion.

York's patrician elite. Secondly, patterns of accumulation which increasingly incorporate cultures of consumption are analyzed:

*"On one level changes in taste and style are economically significant in terms of aggregate choice; on another level, however, the satisfaction of aesthetic and sensual preferences binds otherwise recalcitrant segments of the population into a coherent accumulation regime. These processes have grown in importance with the urban and industrial restructuring that began around 1973" (Zukin, 1982[1988]:204).*

Thus cultural production is for cultural consumption, what was cultural marginality has been taken over by market powers and become a pattern of accumulation. Zukin focuses not on culture per se, but on "culture markets" (1982[1988]:203). Zukin's interpretation of loft living stresses long term shifts in accumulation strategy. The searchings of capital investment are seen to be as relevant as the new middle class' search for place (Jackson, 1985:213). Loft living is explained as a historically contingent, culturally specific response to inner-city disinvestment (Zukin, 1982[1988]:193).

Although Zukin fulfills her own aims by including culture in the analysis, I would argue that she does not sensitize the politico-economic framework enough in terms of culture. She subsumes culture within a restrictive structuralist framework, as such culture has no autonomy in the gentrification process. This sublimation of culture is rooted in the fact that Zukin concentrates on culture markets. Zukin is still sceptical of accepting the significance of culture in its own right:

*"The remarkable openness to non-economic factors that is now breathing fresh air into the social sciences should not divert attention from underlying structural changes" (Zukin, 1982[1988]:208).*

Zukin adopts the term "artistic mode of production" to explain how the lofts came to be gentrified. A play on Marx's capitalist mode of production, the characterization is inherently economic; "a craft industry that follows rather than precedes industrial production" (1982[1988]:19). The artistic mode of production is described as post-industrial and is defined as an accumulation strategy. The artistic mode of production has been generated by the art world, especially by the success of the New York School of Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s and 1950s, and also the Pop Art of the 1960s. World attention on the New York art world stimulated public support, from this there were grass root developments amongst the artists themselves, for example the Artists' Tenants' Association. The arts thus are seen to constitute a model of social change in the creative production of loft living (see page 199). The life cycle of the artistic mode of production depends on creative dynamism and the abilities of market forces, as such Zukin looks at culture in terms of the market and she finds this more in keeping with the political economy approach. In so doing she supports the sociological notion of markets as a social construction. Zukin argues that this approach to the loft market makes four contributions to the critical analysis of the capitalist urban crisis (page 191). Firstly, it focuses on investors rather than consumers as the source of change, this positions her with Smith against the "consumer preference school". Secondly, real estate markets are revealed as arenas of capitalist interaction in terms of production and consumption, and markets integrate and differentiate investment hierarchies between different classes. Thirdly, people negotiate distributive politics with respect to the real estate market with often curious conceptions of property rights. Fourthly, looking at state intervention by paying

attention to real estate markets helps identify many of the hidden groups in the struggle. The end result for Zukin is that culture and capital are not mutually constitutive, but culture is translated as an accumulation strategy and relates to the constitution of the new middle classes. Her analysis directs attention to "investors rather than consumers as the source of change", reflecting large shifts of investment capital towards and within the service sector (1982[1988]:191).

In 1984 Palen and London advocated a multiple interpretation of gentrification (an earlier version by London, appears in Laska and Spain, 1980). They discuss five different explanations: 1. demographic-ecological, 2. sociocultural, 3. political-economic, 4. community networks, and 5. social movement. They argue (page 14) that these approaches are not mutually exclusive, and that,

*"a satisfactory interpretation of the phenomenon of urban reinvasion should incorporate insights from all perspectives".*

They follow this by stating that they are not suggesting a synthesis among theories, but later they go on to argue (page 21) that the social movement perspective may hold the greatest potential for providing a synthesis of the multiple causes of gentrification. I criticize this on two grounds, firstly, they advocate multiple interpretation, but then they revert back to a singular theoretical construct in advocating social movements theory; and, secondly, they contradict themselves by offering a synthesis, which I dislike because the gentrification process is more complicated and chaotic than this implies.

In 1984 Rose argued that gentrification is a "chaotic concept" and that "the processes and elements it comprises need to be thought through again" (page 47). Rose rejects the idea of an analytical thread; gentrification has to be seen as a multiplicity of processes. She criticizes marxist work on gentrification for neglecting employment restructuring and changes in the reproduction of labour power and for its "incorrect conflation of reproduction and consumption". She wants to retain a structural model but make it better able to deal with historical relationships. Rose rejects the commodity, i.e. the gentrified building, as the best point at which to begin an analysis of gentrification. Indeed she argues that there should be more than one starting point. Rose argues that the production of gentrifiers has been neglected, and there has been little attention from marxists to "the processes behind the demographic and 'lifestyle' profiles of gentrifiers" (page 51). She criticizes some marxist writers for instead taking the findings of positivist analyses of gentrification, i.e. demographic and lifestyle characteristics, and thinking that they are able to place them in a structural framework. Rose finds that marxist analyses stultify questions about reproduction which the gentrifiers bring about, by following the marxian shorthand that "production produces consumption". As such consumption is seen as commodity production being absorbed. Rose (page 54) asserts that it is essential "to explore the relationships between gentrification and changes in the reproduction of labour power and people". In theorizing the production of gentrifiers she argues it is important to look at the needs and desires of these groups and the labour relationships inherent in the restructuring of international capitalism: "Gentrifiers are not the mere bearers of a process determined independently of them" (page 56).



Jackson (1985) extends Rose's (1984) article, in looking at structure and agency in gentrification: "A full understanding requires the blending of both strands of analysis" (page 202). Jackson does not wholly reject structural explanations of gentrification, but he limits their ability to offering an explanation for the preconditions of neighbourhood change. He urges the inclusion of

*"a more qualitative understanding of historically contingent factors such as the role of human agency in seeking to manipulate or resist the consequences of these conditions"* (page 214).

Jackson argues that marxist/structuralist interpretations of gentrification give lifestyle a back seat, "lifestyle preferences remain passive until the conditions for their fulfilment come into being" (see page 214). Both Rose (1984) and Jackson (1985) argue for the importance of consumption based explanation thus limiting structuralist interpretation, but they provide no further studies of gentrification to support their arguments.

London, Lee and Lipton (1986:382), also advocate a more sensitive explanation of gentrification. They argue "...we all adhere to one or other theoretical perspective, [we have our] favourite approaches". They argue that this kind of separatism causes "myopic analyses" which only ever provide part of the picture at any one time. They undertook a statistical analysis of some of the explanations for gentrification, constructing sets of hypotheses which they investigated through a gentrification questionnaire sent to 150 universities in 48 cities. They concluded;

*"no one had been completely right or completely wrong because no one has ventured beyond the boundaries of their chosen theoretical perspective. Our results*

*underscore the need for a more eclectic approach to the study of gentrification"* (page 383).

But then they go on to advocate (following, London, 1980 and Palen and London, 1984) the "social movement perspective" as a "synthesis" for all the different causes of gentrification. The social movement perspective looks at the ideology of pro-urbanism on a variety of different levels from the individual up to the city. Again I criticize this argument for returning from the eclectic to the singular theoretically. Moreover the social movement perspective (see Gottdiener, 1986) fails to integrate the vertical (macro to micro scale) and horizontal (groups, institutions) linkages that are relevant to gentrification in space. This is why the anthropologist Draper (1991) modifies social movement theory with Giddens' theory of structuration.

#### **2.4.2 More Recent Attempts**

During a third phase of gentrification literature, from the mid-1980s to the late 1980s<sup>11</sup>, researchers began to link culture and economics in explanations. Marxists considered social reproduction and consumption. The period saw increasingly sophisticated analyses of the gentrification process, and sensitivity to alternative forms of theorizing became more apparent, but there was still a tendency to adhere to the restrictive structure of some theories or conceptualizations at the expense of others.

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<sup>11</sup> See Harvey, 1985a,b; Jager, 1986; Ley, 1986; London et al., 1986; Schaffer and Smith, 1986; Smith and Williams, 1986; Munt, 1987; Smith, 1987c; Zukin, 1987; Clark, 1988; Marcuse, 1988; Mills, 1988; Badcock, 1989; Smith, Duncan and Reid, 1989.

Jager (1986) reads the rise of the new middle class from their architecture, and in so doing demonstrates that culture and capital are mutually constitutive;

*"in that objects of culture are made to bear the burden of a more onerous significance, and yet retain a distinct material function"* (page 85).

He argues that the neo-archaism (an attempt to return to a pre-industrial past in terms of architecture and aesthetics) inherent in gentrification, the taste for the bygone, transcends economics by attaining social position through symbolic sign. The economic is transcended, but the economic is not made subservient. Jager manages to consider both culture and economics without prioritizing one or the other, but he concentrates his analysis in the consumption sphere looking at what the gentrified property signifies rather than how it is produced. If Jager's analysis which concentrates on how culture and economics are mutually constitutive, could be expanded to look not just at class constitution, but to look at gentrification in terms of both production and consumption, some important insights may be gleaned.

Munt (1987) like other authors in the late 1980s was interested in sensitizing the analysis of gentrification to include a combination of the economic and the cultural. He argues that marxist and institutionalist approaches neglect demand and individualist approaches fail to place demand in its economic and cultural context. But ultimately, Munt's work is more weighted towards the economic context;

*"the restructuring of employment in London's economy is the ultimate explanation of the gentrification process"* (page 1195).

He argues for "bringing demand back in" (page 1196), but by adhering to a structuralist approach Munt is unable to facilitate demand, the latter becomes just a list of economic and environmental factors.

In 1987 Smith published a paper in which he in part responds to Rose's (1984) paper. He argues that Rose has forced the "chaos" she talks about onto gentrification through her conceptualization of "marginal gentrifiers";

*"the opportunity to gentrify has filtered down the economic hierarchy and across the political field, but it has hardly filtered down so far that female-headed households earning barely \$10,000 per year should be considered 'gentrifiers'. To include such a household under the rubric of 'gentrification' is to force a chaos on the term which I do not think it has as commonly used"* (1987c:160).

In the same paper he argues that "the notion that production and consumption are mutually implicated - should be at the top of our agenda" (page 163). He is sensitive to demand and consumption; "there is no argument but that demand can at times...alter the nature of production" (page 163). But he still prioritizes a marxist economic interpretation:

*"The new patterns now unfolding do involve the construction of 'consumption landscapes' in the city...but this does not imply that urban geographical change is somehow demand led"* (page 151).

Smith writes that it is time to include a demand notion in marxist analyses of gentrification, but his adherence to the priority of production and accumulation makes this difficult. Smith insists that gentrification should be defined at its core (production) not its margins (consumption) (see page 160). Smith firmly roots the city as consumption landscape within capital restructuring and the regime of accumulation.

The fourth phase in the gentrification literature I categorize as from the late 1980s to the present<sup>12</sup>. The late 1980s continued to develop the arguments of the mid-1980s, certain academics still claimed the high ground for their theoretical interpretations of gentrification and others sought to sensitize the analysis of gentrification. Many of the main arguments in human geography permeated this literature and in certain cases even instigated the conceptual turns. At the close of the 1980s some were tiring of the old dichotomies and issues which clung to the analysis of gentrification. Indeed the 1990s have been experiencing an increasing intellectual discomfort with uni-dimensional or monological explanations of gentrification. Thus the 1990s and likewise this thesis, are calling for a relaxation of the old theoretical boundaries and a sensitization towards differing conceptualizations and exterior influences.

Attempts are now being made to link sets of factors through conceptual or theoretical frameworks. Filion (1991) designs a model to explain the consumption sphere - class structure relationship, and looks at how it is affected by gentrification in areas of Toronto, Canada. The central argument is that gentrification consolidates the gentrifiers' class position. As in Jager's (1986) work, consumption and class formation are linked. The paper turns the gentrification equation on its head and looks at the affect of gentrification on society, and particularly on class. The most important statement in this paper (page 556) is that:

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<sup>12</sup> See Caulfield, 1989; Smith, 1990; Bondi, 1991; Bridge, 1991; Clark, 1991a, 1991b; Hamnett, 1991a, b; Warde, 1991; Filion, 1991; Clark, 1992; Hamnett, 1992; Smith, 1992; Bourne, 1993; Butler, 1993; Ley, 1993; Ley, 1994.

*"...selection opens the door to the expression of human agency within the consumption sphere and thus rules out pure production sphere determination".*

Filion states that his article:

*"makes a contribution to the study of the dialectic relation linking the production sphere and the consumption sphere by studying this relation within the empirical context of gentrification" (page 571).*

Filion illustrates the link between the production and consumption spheres in terms of class divisions. The consumption sphere is an imperfect reflection of the production sphere due to the influence of human agency. Filion reveals humanist tendencies in arguing that "the private market is usually the scene where individual competence reaps its rewards" (page 570). As such Filion does not allow the production and consumption spheres nor structure and agency to be mutually constitutive, the consumption sphere and human agency tend to be prioritized.

Hamnett (1991a) argues for the integration of the Smith and Ley camps. He provides a useful review of the different approaches, and then offers a different starting point for the analysis of gentrification, one probably influenced by Rose (1984);

*"...if gentrification theory has a centrepiece it must rest on the production of potential gentrifiers" (Hamnett, 1991a:187).*

Hamnett is right when he argues that the "choice, consumption and culture" side of the debate has always had one foot in the material base of production with its changes and cultural manifestations. But the issue is that they take the latter as given and do not detail them. As such production and consumption, economics and culture, in for example Ley's work, do not appear to be mutually constitutive. Hamnett's "Smith versus Ley" debate illustrates the main dichotomies between the marxist and

postmodernist (liberal humanist) camps. Smith stresses capital restructuring (structure) and Ley the ability of gentrifiers (agency). Smith emphasizes the supply of gentrifiable property and Ley market demand. More importantly, the Smith versus Ley debate illustrates the sterility of the arguments, for both theorizations are partially correct, but in their dichotomized state are inadequate.

Like Hamnett, Clark (1991a,1991b), tries to link sets of ideas. Rather than arguing between Smith's (1979a) rent gap and Hamnett and Randolph's (1984,1986) value gap, he asserts the relative importance of both in the gentrification of Swedish cities. This new liberalism in the gentrification literature of the 1990s which allows for the importation of contrasting ideas is to be commended. Clark (1991b:24) sums up his position,

*"rent gaps and value gaps are not only non-opposites - they are highly commensurable and best understood within a common theoretical framework".*

It seems apparent that new theory construction in gentrification as in human geography as a whole has opted for and can only go forward by the juxtaposition and complementarity of existing conceptualizations or theorizations. This thesis strengthens this path of discovery, for after all,

*"If there is empirical support for all these theories, can we arrive at an understanding of the ways in which they stand in a logical relation of complementarity?"* (Clark, 1988:247).

In the previous sections I have illustrated the uni-dimensionality of marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification and the interest in, and need for, more eclectic explanations of the process. In Chapter 3 I consider theoretical pluralism as a



way of overcoming the inadequacies in the gentrification literature to date. But the recognition of the importance of plurality goes beyond theory and into the empirical world of the neighbourhood or city, for gentrification may be different depending on the locality under investigation. As such in Chapter 3 I also consider contextualism in order to avoid the universalism inherent in many explanations of gentrification.

## 2.5 Contextual Sensitivity

*"Contextualism is therefore spelled with a capital C; the living world appears only in the plural; ethics has taken the place of morality, the everyday that of theory, the particular that of the general"* (Habermas, 1984).

In response to the second objective of this thesis, to achieve contextual sensitivity by exploring the differences between gentrification in London and New York, in this section I look at the gentrification literature and consider the inadequacies and inconsistencies of those few attempts which have been made to compare gentrification in different locations.

Marx advocated the use of international comparison, in observing that,

*"events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historical surroundings lead to totally different results"* (see Badcock, 1984:87).

The gentrification literature however has shown a remarkable insensitivity to context in terms of comparing the process in different places. Most of the literature deals with single case studies or, at best, a number of cases within a single country. There has been little in the way of direct and detailed international comparison. Ad hoc international comparisons have been made, for example, Gale (1984), Palen and

London (1984), Williams (1984,1986), and, Zukin (1992a). But these have neglected to focus on all three levels which make gentrification context specific; locality, city and nation. Gale (1984:143) argues:

*"To overemphasize the conditions of revitalization would be to ignore critical historical, geographic and political distinctions, many of which, although fading with the passage of time, still impose variations to be recognized".*

Palen and London (1984:185) point out that:

*"We study phenomena that occur within the borders of our own nation while giving far less attention to analyses of similar phenomena in other nations. The result can be findings that are culture specific and not generalizable".*

Zukin (1992a) compares London and New York as landscapes of power. This is a stimulating comparison of the two cities which provides a structural account of the different scales of landscape, but there is no in depth research into gentrification at the locality level.

Some studies began to offer insights into the international differences between gentrification in different countries, but they did not continue this type of comparison.

For example, Hamnett and Randolph, (1984:275) found landlord disinvestment in the United States to be quite different to that in London:

*"This brief overview of the development of the flat break-up market proves an intriguing comparison to Harvey and Chatterjee's study of the Baltimore housing market where landlord disinvestment was related to the difficulties of obtaining mortgage finance in the inner city, the net result apparently being housing dilapidation and abandonment. In direct contrast, while residential disinvestment and flat break-up in central London has also been dependent on the availability of mortgage finance, in many respects, as the events of the 1970s show, it has been stimulated by too much rather than too little finance, both for the disinvesting landlord and the potential owner occupier. This is to emphasize that apparently comparable phenomena, in this case landlord disinvestment, in reality may reflect and result from widely differing processes in differing locations".*

Few, if any, studies have directly compared gentrification in two localities, in two cities, in two different countries. This neglect has been commented on in the last few years;

*"as the empirical descriptions multiply, the differences in the process from place to place are becoming visible"* (Musterd and van Weesep, 1991:12).

and,

*"While comparative studies might assist in specifying the conditions under which particular processes dominate, local case studies that examine more closely not only which individuals are involved but how their class, gender, 'racial' and ethnic positions are expressed and forged through gentrification are also needed"* (Bondi, 1991:196).

Musterd and van Weesep (1991) ask how portable the concept of gentrification is for cities around the globe. In particular they speculate as to whether there is an "Atlantic Gap" in operation, that is, if the differences between the more market orientated United States and more state controlled Europe provide two differing processes of gentrification. Smith (1991:56-59), on the other hand, asserts that America versus Europe is a false dichotomy and that there are greater differences within Europe than between Europe and the United States. But Smith contradicts this latter argument, for he suggests a number of ways in which gentrification can be different in Europe and the United States, his argument being that these differences are not enough to warrant two different experiences and two different explanations. For example, he argues (page 59) that because in Britain over a quarter of housing is publicly owned, this affects the extent and patterning of gentrification and that in the United States where public housing is less widespread, gentrification is more complete in a neighbourhood. He argues that because the gentrification process in the United States has less of an

association with tenurial transformation, the gentrification process is able to move stereotypically faster. He asserts (page 55) the "prevalence and indeed normality of abandonment in the U.S. urban experience", and the fact that;

*"...in European cities there is more state constraint obviating abandonment. In addition, what we might call the 'cultural economy' - the cultural construction of the economy - is still less conducive to treating the home as a pure investment strategy in many European cities. Thus curtailed, market-led abandonment is an exceptional event in Europe".*

Smith (page 58) also argues that the fact that European city centres are older than their American counterparts has meant that their disinvestment has enabled a more extensive reinvestment. On the other hand Smith (page 59) argues that gentrification in the United States leads to a more dramatic reversal in investment.

There seem then to be a number of possible differences and similarities between gentrification on both sides of the Atlantic, although no-one has so far systematically compared the two. This thesis hopes to contribute to a better understanding of these through a investigation into the context of gentrification in two areas, one in London and the other in New York. The positive aspects of investigating gentrification in two neighbourhoods are summarized by Lovering (1989:10) who asserts that localities;

*"provide an empirical framework within which to explore how 'life-worlds' hang together and provide the medium for a hierarchy of systems. In research terms, a locality, as a spatially limited zone, defined by some economic indices, is a window onto wider processes".*

An investigation into contextuality is therefore a necessary part of a pluralistic analysis, as the next section illustrates.

## 2.6 Linking Theoretical Pluralism and Contextualism Towards a More Sensitive Analysis of Gentrification

Both theoretical and contextual sensitivity have been chosen as the objectives of this thesis, because of the illustrated inadequacies in the gentrification literature. But equally importantly these two objectives are linked, as I attempt to respond to Smith's (1991:60) argument that, "relations of complementarity are less geographical than logical and analytical". In essence Smith is arguing for general theory, for meta-narrative as an explanation for gentrification, a theory in which contextual differences are subsumed under the whole. In this thesis I want to move away from the inadequacies of this kind of explanation. In so doing I should increase the sensitivity of my explanation both conceptually and contextually, for following Williams (1984:205-206);

*"...given the locally specific nature of the structure of each urban center, its economy and social patterning, it is reasonable to expect the precise form taken by any process of change to vary from center to center. Such a position probably negates any attempt to erect a universal account of gentrification, even as a recognition of complexity undermines arguments that render this process the outcome of single factors, such as the rise in fuel costs or changes in lifestyle".*

Theoretical and empirical sensitivity then demands a comparative case study approach.

In Chapter 3 I go on to rethink the analysis of gentrification. I provide some positive suggestions on how to overcome the inadequacies of explanations of gentrification

and I offer a way of approaching the lack of sensitivity to context. I provide a methodology for analyzing gentrification in London and New York. Chapter 3 attempts to find, not solutions, for this is too great a claim, but at the very least it offers positive suggestion to make for a more sensitive analysis of gentrification.



## CHAPTER 3 RETHINKING THE ANALYSIS OF GENTRIFICATION

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I aim to demonstrate how we can move beyond the limitations illustrated in the previous chapter by adopting some ideas from postmodernism. These limitations are: firstly, the adherence to singular theoretical analyses, secondly, the bias of marxist, postmodernist and some eclectic explanations of gentrification towards the economic sphere and modernist analyses; and thirdly, the insensitivity to context. To open up the analysis of gentrification and to make it more sensitive, I want to concentrate on postmodernism as an attitude and not postmodernity as an object.

Aspects of postmodernism force academics with different claims to the truth, to think more of the ontological bases and security of their epistemologies. Postmodernism tries to expose the restrictions imposed on us by the way we construct knowledge, in this it seeks to reveal the hidden ontological assumptions implicit in our theoretical statements (Dear, 1988:267):

*"...theory is, practically speaking, a form of narrative...narrative artifacts, ways of seeing, logical schematic grids placed over our perception of the world into which some parts fit better than others, as a result of which some degree of illumination may ensue"* (Cooke, 1990:335).

Postmodernism does not attempt to resolve the conflicts and contradictions between different theories, rather it enhances both the commensurabilities and the tensions between theories in order to gain more insights from the different conceptualizations.



The anti-theoretical slant in postmodernism has grown from the perception of a real problem with the foundations of knowledge: theory tries to make the subject and the object as one, but to do this theory would have to replicate the world.

In this chapter two sets of ideas from postmodernism are investigated; pluralism and contextuality. Pluralism<sup>13</sup> which incorporates the notion of complementarity allows marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification to be mutually constitutive. From this I design two complementary theoretical frameworks, one marxist and the other postmodernist. The second idea is contextuality which incorporates the notion of locality, from this I go on in Chapter 4 to introduce the two study areas selected for this research.

Throughout this chapter in which I rethink the analysis of gentrification both theoretically and contextually. I hold on to the idea that the urban landscape is formed by, and a mirror of, a country's political economy, culture and society (Knox, 1991).

### **3.2 Rethinking Gentrification: Theoretical and Conceptual Pluralism**

The ideas behind this rethinking of gentrification began with the assertion that what we see through one eye, is not the same as what we see through the other eye (Richards, 1972:114). I wanted to look with both my eyes; to emphasize my rejection

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<sup>13</sup> The main difference between postmodernism's pluralism and the pluralism of a previous generation is that postmodernism is interested in a changing modernity (McLennan, 1989:178).

of that monological theorization which can be associated with being positioned as either a marxist or a postmodernist:

*"The realization that these two situations are complementary solves the riddle of the licentiate's egos observing each other..."* (Rosenfeld, cited by Holton, 1970:1047).

In the theoretical battle between marxist and postmodernist analyses of gentrification neither have achieved the upper hand, but more importantly the battle has identified some of the problems which exist within and between both analyses. Therefore the way forward, the way which avoids the theoretical stalemate found in the battle between both conceptualizations, is to inform both marxism and postmodernism through each other in the articulation and comparison of their ideas.

Like Graham (1988), I do not want to choose between marxism and postmodernism, for

*"If Marxists can acknowledge that their discourse is but one of many discourses, they can make themselves heard in the postmodern cacophony. If they continue to privilege Marxism as the only true discourse, they will very quickly silence themselves in the ears of others. For Marxism is patently not alone, or primary, in the community of discourses"* (Graham, 1988:64).

I want the pluralism associated with a consideration of both sets of explanation because

*"Post-modern anti-essentialism invites us to free ourselves from the burdens which we long have carried - the burden of explaining a complex and multifaceted history with a limited set of categories, of revealing rather than constituting the centrality of class, of waiting for politics rather than entering politics, of scorning non-Marxism as an intellectual and political error rather than engaging it in many forms and relating it to Marxism by relating Marxism to it...post-modernism resists the subordination of all experience and social life to class struggle and the laws of accumulation, as Marxism can and should"* (Graham, 1988:65).

Pile and Rose (1992:129-130) argue that it is the demand to choose between modernism and postmodernism which obscures their shared assumptions and confirms the idea of a dichotomy functioning to maintain order. The demands to choose between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification likewise obscures their shared assumptions and creates a functional dichotomy. As such I do not choose between the two, but use both in a pluralistic methodology.

This rethinking of gentrification is informed by the positions associated with certain postmodernists that no one theory can claim superiority over another, and that a uni-dimensional modernist theory like marxism, resists important insights. The pluralism of interpretation found in some versions of postmodernism is therefore attractive. The pluralism found in postmodernism can be traced back to Nietzsche ([1909]1968:101):

*"The unlimited ways of interpreting the world: every interpretation is a symptom of growth or decline. Unity (monism) is a need of inertia; plurality in interpretation is a sign of strength. One should not desire to deprive the world of its disquieting and enigmatical nature".*

I define a pluralistic explanation as one which is aware of the limitations of singular explanations, and of the incompleteness of alternatives. Following McLennan (1989), a pluralistic explanation is cynical of meta-narrative, it discourages uni-lateral thought, it is sensitive to underlying inequalities, it is interested in competition and consensus between different sets of ideas, and it emphasizes overlap and inter-negotiation. The formulation of a pluralistic methodology enables me to follow Smith's (1991:56) precepts for the analysis of gentrification; a framework "...that can incorporate labour as well as housing markets, production as well as consumption,

economics and culture". In addition Putnam (1981:xi,73-74) argues that a pluralist standpoint strives not to take sides between arguably sterile dichotomies, but to break their stranglehold on sensible discussion.

In seeking to transcend the oppositional thinking produced by the dualism of marxist and postmodernist analysis, I use the notion of complementarity to glue the differences and similarities together. The methodology used allows me to exploit both the contradictions and commensurabilities of both sets of explanation. I specify the contradications between marxist and postmodernist thought, for the productive tension between both sets of ideas has rarely been exploited. Following Feyerabend (1975:47):

*"...A scientist who is interested in maximum empirical content, and who wants to understand as many aspects of his theory as possible, will accordingly adopt a pluralistic methodology, he will compare theories with other theories and he will try to improve rather than discard the views that appear to lose in the competition".*

Smith (1991:53) emphasizes the need to consider commensurabilities:

*"I want to propose that rather than juxtaposing different hypotheses which often focus on different sorts of processes, and then searching for the theory of gentrification, we are likely to learn more by exploring the connections between different approaches. Towards this end I think we need to sort out different scales of analyses at which different theories may be appropriate, and to explore the connections between these scales of analysis".*

Hamnett (1991b:49) argues for the same course of action: "to advance our understanding of the process by seeing how the two partial explanations fit together".

Foucault (1983:xiii) argues that thought is better developed through juxtaposition and proliferation, and what is multiple and different is preferable for productive

purposes<sup>14</sup>. But the two frameworks are not polarized against each other, for as Harvey (1989b:42) states, it is dangerous to depict complex relations in such a manner. Indeed, the principle of complementarity attempts to overcome duality not by looking for a new universal theory, but by comparing and informing one set of ideas with another. After all,

*"in arguing with rivals...we presuppose that our theories are not discrete and wholly incommensurable, but overlapping, and only incommensurable in limited areas"* (Sayer, 1992b:4).

Complementarity is a means through which to approach, focus on, specify and comprehend the real incongruities and commensurabilities between marxist and postmodernist theorizations of gentrification. Incompatible conceptions can be represented without direct conflict and the outcomes will support and complement each other (see Richards, 1972:114). As Clark argues (1992:361):

*"even if competing theories are mutually exclusive due to incommensurable abstractions, they may both be true and necessary for a thorough description of that which theories are about"*.

Juxtaposing a marxist and a postmodernist explanation of gentrification means that the "revolution" will occur at the interface between the two, for following Olsson (1980, Preface to *Birds in Egg*) who talks about the juxtaposition of **Birds in Egg** with **Eggs in Bird**;

*"...the old and the new are tied together through their backs, staring in different directions and with faces painted in complementary colors. Out of the total image of whiteness grows nevertheless a presentiment of another social science"*.

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Poster (1984:164) tried to reconcile marxism and postmodernism by proposing a dialogue between historical materialism and Foucaultian analysis. But in the end he just expected marxists to heed the new developments from postmodernism.

Briefly, I want to argue why the construction of complementarity is useful in relation to marxist and postmodernist analyses in geography. Marx himself and those who advocate a marxist geography have had much difficulty in overcoming the contradictions between economic determinism and anti-economism. For example, Massey's (1984) work rejects economic determinism whilst allowing the economy to determine uneven development (Graham, 1990:54). The construction of marxist and postmodernist complementarity helps those marxist geographers who are trapped by this contradiction. For marxist economic determinism is complemented by postmodernism's anti-economism. This helps the analysis of gentrification, for as Zukin (1982[1988]:177) argues, gentrification illustrates "a close connection, in late industrial capitalism, between accumulation and cultural consumption".

I am though hesitant to integrate marxist and postmodernist ideas prematurely. In the history of geography the transcendence of theoretical and conceptual boundaries has rarely been met with praise and is usually discussed in negative terms as "combining the uncombinable" (Cloke et al. 1991:95). Giddens' (1984) structuration theory is one such example. In reaction to the limitations of marxist-style analyses and humanist analyses, and expressed in a refusal to be fully based in one or the other camp, structuration theory tried to combine structure and agency. Some argued that this was not an altogether successful endeavour (see Pred, 1983; Johnston and Claval, 1984; Philo, 1984). In a different vein Sayer (1984) has attempted to merge marxism and humanism in advocating a realist geography. This has also been criticized, by



Saunders and Williams (1986) who see it as a disguised marxism, and by Harvey (1987b) who on the other hand sees critical realism as incompatible with marxism. I reject these criticisms of theoretical and conceptual integration. The criticisms are examples of the attempt by academics to dichotomize social science in an attempt to maintain positions of power and order (see Pile and Rose, 1992). The separation and dichotomization of marxism and postmodernism necessitates a political choice as to which side of the fence to place ourselves on; there are no allowances made for a middle ground or for something outside of these discourses altogether. On the other hand integrating marxism and postmodernism pollutes the oft-defended purity of both theories (see Graham, 1988:61), and as in power politics one side may always dominate. One of the main criticisms of both Giddens and Sayer has been of the domination of marxism in their discourse. Likewise in the previous chapter I criticized postmodernist interpretations of gentrification for always returning back to the economic sphere and to modernist discourses. Exploiting the tension between the duality of marxist and postmodernist explanations is one way of overcoming these problems.

Using duality is by no means a new idea in geography. Duality in geography has been used in order to attain a synthesis between different theories or concepts. As mentioned, Giddens worked on the duality of structure and agency in order to transcend the determinism of structuralism and the voluntarism of human agency. Following Gregson (1986:185);

*"duality is central to the entire structurationist programme, figuring in both Giddens's presentation of the agency-structure relationship and the links between this*



*and time and space. each exerts a determining influence on the other but this is again of equal weight".*

Sayer (1984), identifying with Giddens' project, is positive about the results. He argues that Giddens has achieved his goal through the use of duality. Sayer uses duality to maintain the strengths of both marxism and humanism as complementary parts in differentiating social reality (see Cloke et al. 1991:151). For Sayer (1992b:11) and realists (a) and (b) are compatible. They can simultaneously accept two different ontologies and maintain their integrity as complementary parts in an analysis of social reality. Gunnar Olsson (1980:3e-8e) believes in duality and in complementarity as well. He argues that understanding involves translating between a set of different meanings, for knowledge is extended in the comparison of ideas. He finds the resulting issues over "fidelity" intriguing. Olsson argues, "As any epistemologist knows, binary opposition is the first step towards dialectical transcendence". The dualism of marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification and the conflicts therein provide Olsson's first step towards the transcendence of their difference. But, the principle of complementarity attempts to overcome duality not by looking for a new universal theory (or synthesis, as does Giddens in his structuration theory), but by comparing and informing one set of ideas with another. It wants "to look inside one text for another, dissolve one text into another, or build one text into another" (Harvey, 1989b:51).

There are obviously difficulties in a methodological construction of this kind. A pluralistic methodology is not some kind of grand solution, it is still subject to the

restrictions and inadequacies of those theories or conceptualizations chosen, for following Baudrillard (1986:141) "the secret of theory is, indeed, that truth doesn't exist". Moreover, Smith (1991:56) argues:

*"While a more sophisticated explanation opens up the tight closure of a monologic theory, this also brings dangers. It is insufficient to simply list a menu of 'factors' and mistake this for an explanation..."*

This is not a problem in this analysis because a menu of factors is not listed, rather an analytical framework of interconnected categories is constructed. But, I am well aware following Clark (1992:358) that:

*"we have no foolproof holistic theory of or methodology for the study of gentrification, and it would be presumptuous to think we ever will"*.

Indeed it would be naive to assert a foolproof method for the analysis of gentrification, yet there is a strong case for constructing the best framework of investigation from the theoretical evidence collected so far. I find marxism and postmodernism to be the best explanations of gentrification at this point in time. The notion of complementarity allows us not to have to choose between one or the other in terms of mutual exclusivity. We are instead able to inform one theory by the other, whilst still locating their difference through their methodological separation as two frameworks.

### **3.3 Frameworks for a More Sensitive Analysis**

I have argued that pluralistic methodology and complementarity are constructive ideas through which I can produce a more sensitive analysis of gentrification. With these ideas in mind and drawing on the arguments surveyed in the previous chapter, I

have constructed two frameworks, one marxist (Figure 3.1) and the other postmodernist (Figure 3.2).

Together these frameworks demonstrate that:

*"At the simplest level, economically, buildings provide for investment, store capital, create work, house activities, occupy land, provide opportunities for rent; socially, they support relationships, provide shelter, express social divisions, permit hierarchies, house institutions, enable the expression of status and authority, embody property relations; spatially, they establish place, define distance, enclose space, differentiate area; culturally, they store sentiment, symbolize meaning, express identity; politically, they symbolize power, represent authority, become an arena for conflict, or a political resource" (King, 1990).*

King (1988:73) argues that an analysis of the built environment which includes the political economy of that environment and its social and cultural change should examine three basic assumptions; firstly, how the physical environment is produced, secondly, the values, attitudes and images related to that environment, and, thirdly, the relationship of people to their physical environment. The frameworks have been constructed to encompass all these features.

Following Morrill (1987:535), the marxist and postmodernist frameworks should be capable of disciplined inquiry. They should be capable of duplication in different study areas, with the ability to incorporate yet reflect differences between places. The frameworks must act as an integrated explanatory reference, and they must be supple enough to move between and reflect different scales of analysis.

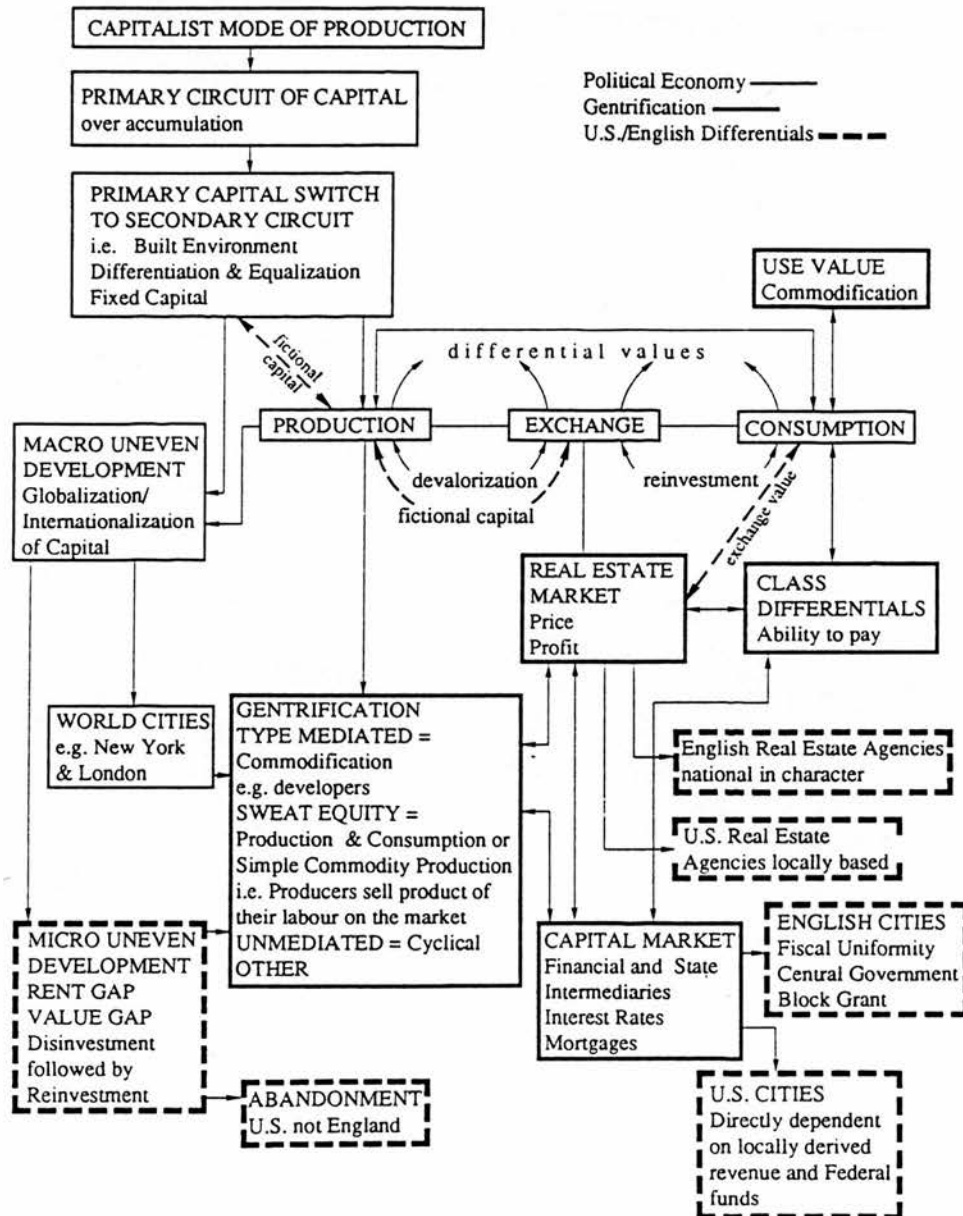
In the next two sections I look at the concepts illustrated in the marxist and postmodernist frameworks. I also comment on the complementarities and productive tensions which exist between the two. The connection between the two frameworks is inspired by the attitude from postmodernism which emphasizes that everything we study is related to everything else (see Rosenau, 1992:112-114, on postmodern intertextuality).

### **3.3.1 The Marxist Framework**

The marxist framework has been constructed at three levels; firstly, at the level of political economy; secondly, marxist theorizations of gentrification; and thirdly, the differences in gentrification between England and the United States. The framework has been constructed so that the internal parts relate to each other, and each section of the framework at the first two levels, if expanded, can represent the totality. The framework is inherently dynamic, in following the dynamism of urbanism and gentrification in particular.

The notions of accumulation and class discussed in Chapter 2.2 formulate the marxist framework. These notions are constructed around the central marxian thesis of

**Figure 3.1 The Marxist Framework**



production, exchange and consumption. The accumulation part of the framework begins with the capitalist mode of production. This feeds into Harvey's (1982) circuits of capital argument, where a primary capital switch to the built environment or secondary circuit occurs (see also Downs, 1973; Bradford and Rubinowitz, 1975; Williams, 1978). The economically determined nature of accumulation is complemented by the postmodernist framework's interest in culture and cultural processes.

The marxist framework then moves on to consider uneven development. This has been divided into macro uneven development (see Smith and Williams, 1986) referring to the globalization or internationalization of capital, and micro uneven development referring to the rent gap (Smith, 1979a) and the value gap (Hamnett and Randolph, 1984,1986). Uneven development has been divided in this manner because progress in analyzing gentrification can only be made if "the levels of influence are analytically distinguished" and "the levels are interrelated" (Dangschat, 1991:63). Restructuring at all levels results from the interplay between the local, national and international scales (see Wilson, 1991:412). Following Clark (1988:244) a degree of human agency is relevant to the rent gap, and I would also argue to the value gap, the postmodernist framework provides some complementary information.

Gentrification type is included in the framework (see Smith, 1979b:26) because it illustrates strategies of accumulation. This is related to the exchange part of the framework, where the marketing of property is mediated through the real estate

market and the capital market. This section of the framework is complemented by the sections on style, desire, quality and interest groups in the postmodernist framework.

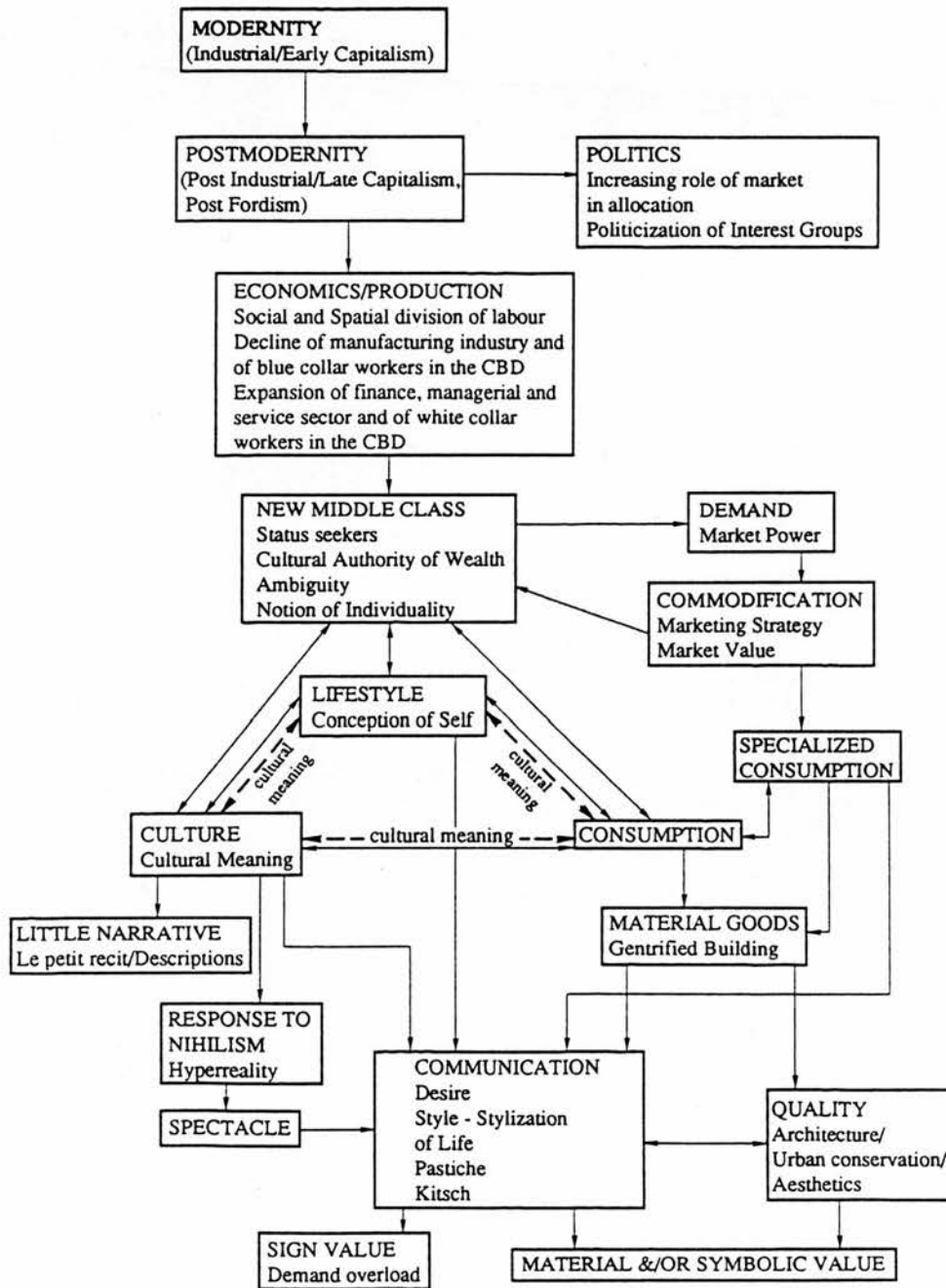
Class permeates all sections of the framework to some degree, but it is more explicit in the consumption part of the framework. Although consumption is not accorded the priority which production receives in the marxist framework:

*"...consumption, as the concluding act, which is regarded not only as the final aim but as the ultimate purpose, falls properly outside the sphere of economy, except in so far as it in turn exerts a reciprocal action on the point of departure thus once again initiating the whole process" (Marx, 1859:194).*

Where for Marx consumption initiates the whole process again, here the consumption part of the framework is complemented by the postmodernist framework where the issues around consumption can be addressed more fully. Class differentials in the marxist framework are both complemented by and in tension with conceptualizations of the new middle class in the postmodernist framework. Following Williams (1984) (see Chapter 2.2.2.1) considerations of class give marxism some element of human agency; conceptualizations of the new middle class from the postmodernist framework complement and can also be in conflict with conceptualizations of class struggle from the marxist framework.



**Figure 3.2 The Postmodernist Framework**



Use value is an interesting concept with which to leave the marxist framework, as the idea of commodification pushes us into conceptualizations of a postmodern society.

### **3.3.2 The Postmodernist Framework**

The postmodernist framework has been constructed from concepts taken from the postmodernist literature on gentrification (Chapter 2.3). The framework merges ideas of postmodernism as both an object and an attitude; it looks at both the periodization (Chapter 2.3.2) and the style of postmodernity (Chapter 2.3.3). The framework is drawn in a linear fashion with arrows emphasizing the interconnections between the different concepts, yet implicit is an emphasis on simultaneity (Soja, 1989).

The postmodernist framework begins by distinguishing between modernity and postmodernity in economic terms (see Chapter 2.3.2). This slippage into neo-marxist or post-marxist ways of thinking illustrates how easy it is to complement the two theories, for the economistic nature of the transition from modernity to postmodernity is complemented by a new cultural production (see Ley, 1987a; Albertsen, 1988). Like Derrida (1981:24) I do not conceive of a total break between modernism and postmodernism, they dominate the top of the framework and the change associated with them generates the sections of the framework below.

The grass roots scene emerges more fully with the politicization of interest groups in postmodernity (see Filion, 1991:563):

*"This is the picture, full of contrasts and confusion, in which new social contradictions are inextricably mixed with boy scout attitudes, where you get a*

*rejection of new forms of oppression at the same time as a hankering after the 'good old days', where revolutionary action is juxtaposed with a defense of the social contract of neighbourliness" (Cowley et al., 1977:41).*

The ambiguous nature of the new middle class is also associated with the transition to postmodernity. There are tensions between the relatively watertight categories of class in the marxist framework and the more ambiguous categories of class in the postmodernist framework.

The pivot of the postmodernist framework is a triangle: lifestyle, culture and consumption. Cultural meaning emphasizes the meaning behind cultural activity and the relationship between the three.

In terms of lifestyle the new middle class have a specific conception of who they are and/or who they want to be. This relates directly to both culture and consumption. It also relates to the communication part of the framework, for lifestyle signifies status. There are productive tensions between the postmodernist conceptualizations of self and desire, etc. and marxist concerns with accumulation; this is encapsulated, in part, in the structure versus agency debate.

The postmodernist framework complements the marxist framework by emphasizing culture. The framework suggests we look at,

*"...cultural concepts...in relation to the development of the institution of property, the effects of accumulation on attitudes to community, the development of class and status consciousness in relation to the transformation in settlement patterns and change in the forms of dwellings, and the development of aesthetic consciousness in relation to the commodification of much in daily life. Above all, it requires a massive intellectual effort to examine, within a critical history of ideas, the production of*

*knowledge about environments, the ideologies related to these, of notions of 'taste', 'views', 'environment preferences' and questions of 'design'" (King, 1988:79).*

The postmodernist framework also complements the marxist framework by emphasizing consumption:

*"...many people now derive social meaning from consumption instead of production, defining their roles outside the job and inside the supermarket, restaurant and regional shopping centre" (Zukin, 1992a:200-201).*

Marketing strategies, commodification, communication, market power and specialized consumption are all important parts of the consumption part of the framework. Moving on from consumption, gentrification is seen to be a response to nihilism (see Mills, 1988; Caulfield, 1989). The style and quality of the gentrified building communicates economic power, and a set cultural and lifestyle conception; it is not just an accumulation strategy as seen in the marxist framework.

The final emphasis of the framework is on material and/or symbolic value and sign value. There are both complementarities and tensions between use value from the marxist framework and the symbolic and sign values from the postmodernist framework.

Nevertheless, I can only direct attention towards some of the complementarities and productive tensions between the marxist and postmodernist frameworks. Empirical application should elucidate and reveal the complementarities and tensions more explicitly.

These two frameworks have been designed as part of a pluralistic methodology which juxtaposes marxist and postmodernist ideas on gentrification from the literature in response to the first objective of this thesis, theoretical sensitivity. In response to the second objective of the thesis, contextual sensitivity, to which I now turn, I operationalize the frameworks in two neighbourhoods, to be shown in Chapter 4.

### **3.4 Rethinking Gentrification: Contextuality**

*"A good model [of gentrification] can be derived from the methodological and theoretical insights which are espoused by 'postmodern science' [Soja, 1989]. Its hallmark is the interpretation of phenomena in their context. This approach follows from the realization that social phenomena differ by place and time" (van Weesep, 1994:80).*

Rethinking gentrification so that it becomes sensitive to context necessitates the theoretical pluralism which I have outlined in the previous sections. For a sensitive understanding of places,

*"...requires a non-reductionist theory in which social life is neither independent of, nor reducible to, classes and the spatial division of labor. Gender, age, ethnic, religious, and nationalist divisions skewer the worlds of production and reproduction just as they are likewise skewered by them" (Warf, 1993:167).*

Complementing a marxist analysis with a postmodernist analysis offers the analytical criteria to make the analysis of gentrification sensitive to context or place. In the modern project of which marxism is a proponent the world is seen as a singular place, whereas the postmodern project celebrates differences in the world, the plurality of places:

*"The sense that there are plural histories to the world, that there are diverse cultures and particularities which were excluded from Western Modernity's universalistic project, but now surface to the extent that they cast doubts on the*

*viability of the project, is one particular outcome of the current phase of the processes of globalization" (Featherstone, 1993:172).*

One of the problems with marxist theory which adopts overarching general theoretical constructs is an insensitivity to context and place. Certain forms of postmodernism prefer *ad hoc* localized discourses which are much more sensitive:

*"Contextuality - the reassertion of time and space into social theory (and an end of the primacy of time over space). Postmodern geography asserts that when and where things happen is central to how they happen. Thus, theory must acknowledge not only that knowledge is historically specific, but geographically specific as well, i.e., explanation must be tailored to the unique characteristics of places" (Warf, 1993:166).*

Moreover, the relationship between modernity and postmodernity in the two frameworks is important in investigating whether it has become a cliché that we live in one world (see Featherstone, 1993:169). Has the globalization of culture in postmodernity led to homogenization and the destruction of difference?

I want to document the specific dynamics of gentrification in different places by being sensitive to national, city and neighbourhood context. I want to consider whether Giddens (1984) is correct when he argues that there can be no general theories of place, for Ley (1993:173) argues in terms of gentrification,

*"There are local inflections, they are important...but at the end of the day...There is order that is transferable from place to place, as it is from one observer to another".*

Are then the commonalities between gentrification in different places more important than the differences?



In order to analyze gentrification in a manner which is sensitive to context, I have selected two localities, these I investigate through a pluralistic methodology which combines marxist and postmodernist analytical categories:

*"Localization is clearly evident in the processes of gentrification as the new middle class moved back to the city to restore old neighbourhoods..."* (Featherstone, 1993:179).

This focus on two small localities in two very large cities helps us to move from a micro to a macro scale and vice versa, and more importantly provides a link between economy/structure and culture/agency. An emphasis on contextuality from the local to the national scale is important, given that the other objective of this thesis is to sensitize the analysis of gentrification theoretically so that economic structures, culture and lifeworlds hang together.

I turn now to look at the two localities which I have chosen to analyze, and I discuss how the two theoretical frameworks of investigation were put into practice in the field.



## **CHAPTER 4 FIELDWORK: AREAS AND THEORY INTO PRACTICE**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Two areas of mature gentrification were selected for comparative fieldwork: Barnsbury in the north London borough of Islington and Park Slope in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. Barnsbury and Park Slope were selected because they have some striking similarities: For example, both were once middle class suburbs, both are compact and distinct neighbourhoods, in both areas gentrification began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in both areas the housing is a mixture of single family and multi-family, owner occupied and rented, and both Barnsbury and Park Slope are designated conservation areas. The task was to find out how different gentrification was between Barnsbury and Park Slope despite these similarities.

In the next two sections I briefly introduce Barnsbury and Park Slope, and then I go on to discuss my fieldwork in these two areas.

### **4.2 Barnsbury, Islington, North London**

Barnsbury is a residential neighbourhood in the borough of Islington in inner north London (see Figure 4.1). The areal boundaries for the study area are Offord Road and Laycock Street to the north, Pentonville Road to the south, Caledonian Road to the west and Upper Street merging into Islington High Street to the east (see Figure 4.2). Four railway/underground stations mark the limits of the area: Highbury and Islington

Figure 4.1 Barnsbury in London

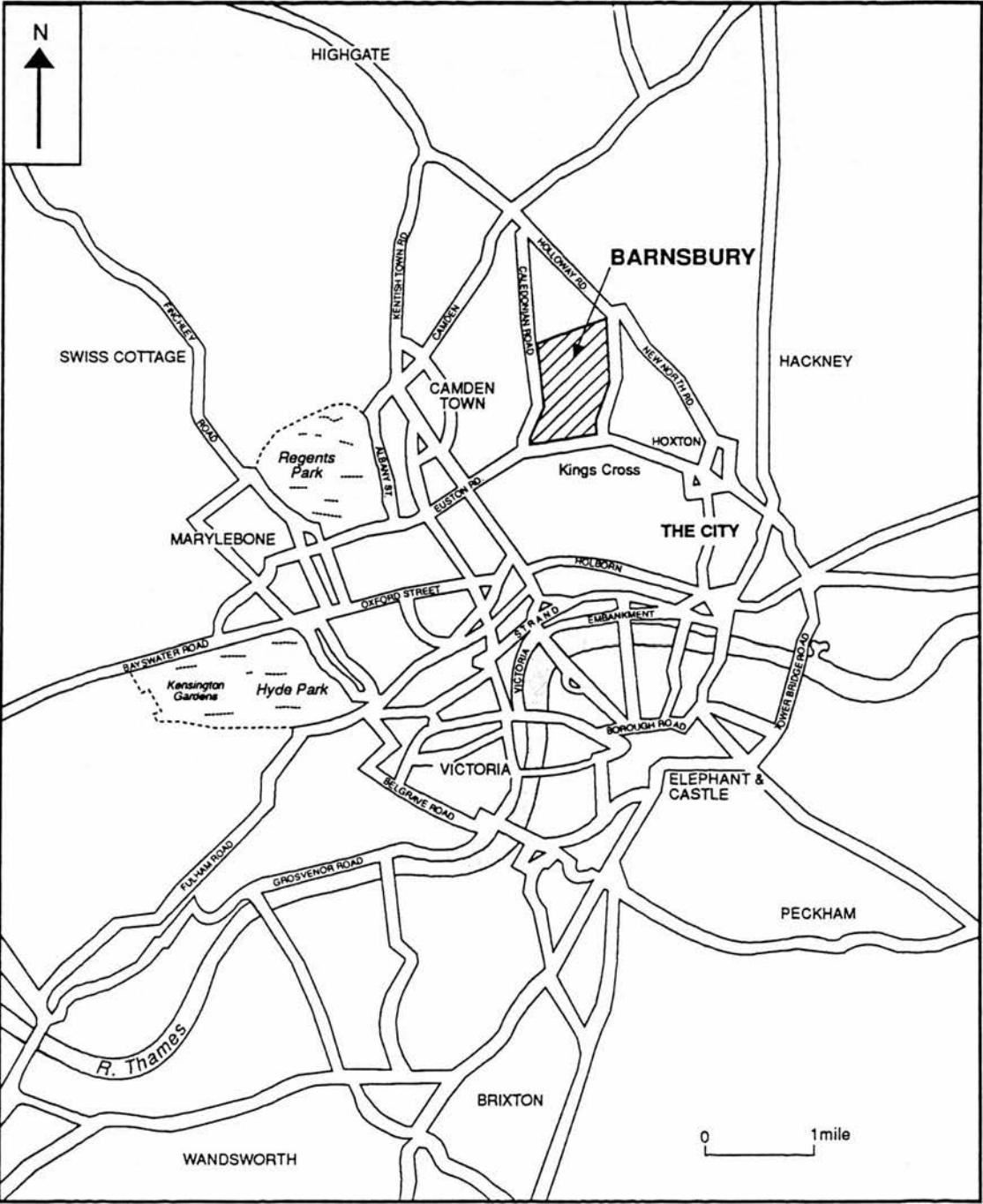


Figure 4.2 Street Map of Barnsbury and Conservation Area

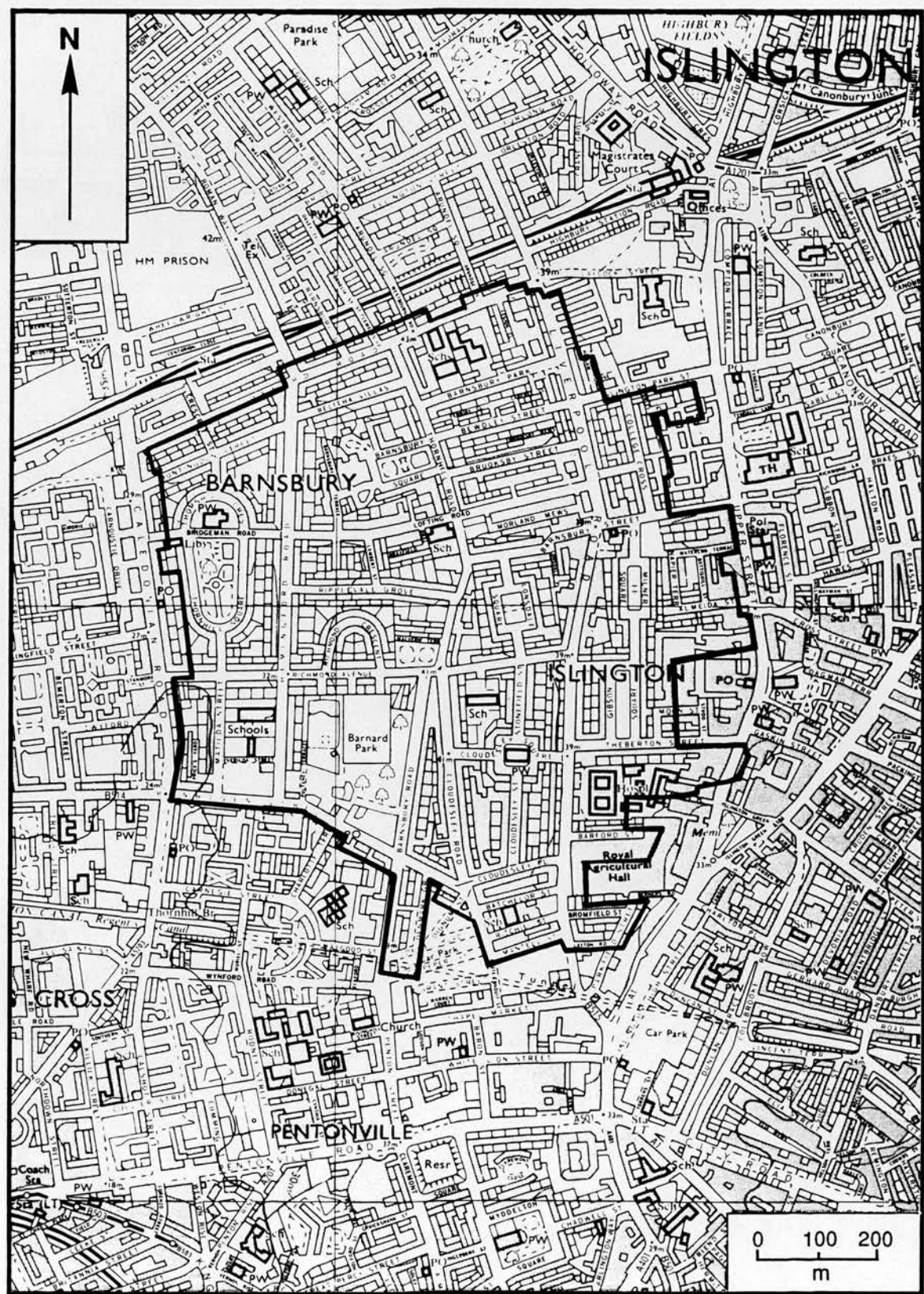
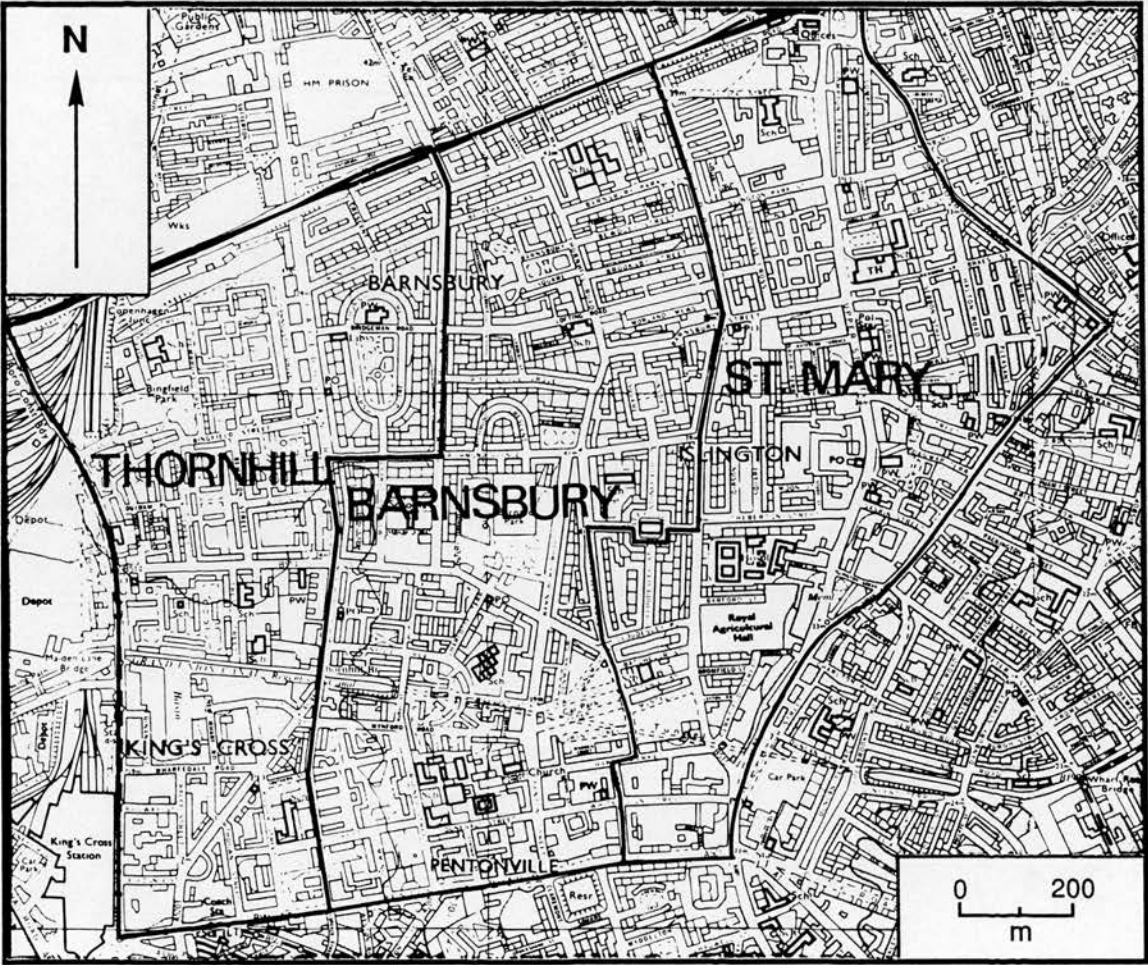


Figure 4.3 Census Wards Associated with Barnsbury, 1991



underground station to the north-east, Caledonian Road and Barnsbury Station to the north-west, the Angel underground station to the south-east and King's Cross to the south-west. Barnsbury is located 2 miles from the centre of London, a 10 to 15 minute journey using the underground. The study area is approximately 1 mile square, and generally the land falls from a high plateau to the west. In 1991 three census wards covered the area (Figure 4.3), the Barnsbury ward, part of the Thornhill ward and part of the St. Mary ward. The number and size of enumeration districts has changed between each census year 1961 to 1991.

Barnsbury was built as a London suburb around 1820 on hilltop fields stretching northwards:

*"You who are anxious for a country seat,  
Pure air, green meadows and suburban views,  
Rooms snug and light - not overlarge but neat,  
And gardens water'd with refreshing dews,  
May find a spot adapted to your taste,  
Near Barnsbury Park, or rather Barnsbury Town  
Where everything looks elegant and chaste,  
And Wealth reposes on a bed of down"<sup>15</sup>*

Barnsbury today covers only a small part of the medieval manorial land from which it attained its name. Barnsbury was named after Ralph de Berners who held its manorial lands during the C13th. The wider area of this part of north London includes a mishmash of gentrified enclaves, council estates, and intertwined are the remains of London's manufacturing industry. Barnsbury is an area of terraces and free standing

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in William Hone's "Table Book", 1827, cited in Cosh, 1981:1.



villas<sup>16</sup> (Plates 4.1 and 4.2). Barnard Park, Barnsbury Square, Thornhill Square and Cloudesley Square act as focusing points in the area. The south-west of Barnsbury covers a sector of 1960s council estates; the Chapel Market area to the south-east is commercial; the north-east is dominated by old tenement blocks and small industrial units; and, the rest of Barnsbury contains listed buildings and an attractive townscape. The architecture in Barnsbury is "pleasing" and "harmonious":

*"Unadorned Georgian streets lead to late Georgian stuccoed and balconied houses by way of unique squares - the expansive ovate Thornhill Square, the arcadian Barnsbury Square, the curiously Gothic Lonsdale Square, and the elegant Gibson Square from which the starkness of Milner Square's French Mechanical Style can be glimpsed"* (Pring, 1968/69:2).

The squares in Barnsbury are characterized by an eclectic architecture which provokes different atmospheres throughout the area. Barnsbury Square (Plate 4.3) is influenced by the Romantic tradition, especially Nash's Park Village West, it has a country atmosphere. The imposing moody architecture of Lonsdale Square (Plate 4.4) is in the ecclesiastical Tudor-Gothic style, unique in London. Cloudesley Square (Plates 4.5) is dominated by the Holy Trinity Church designed in the Gothic architectural style (a brick copy of the Kings College Chapel at Cambridge) by Charles Barry who treated it with "humorous contempt". Milner Square (Plates 4.6), has an individualized style which appears oppressive and sinister, like something out of an old horror movie. The roofs of the houses are invisible and the uniformity is block like and extreme, Nicholas Pevsner described it as, "...naked, in sheer harshness

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<sup>16</sup> Terraces are the equivalent of row houses in Park Slope. Freestanding villas are large detached houses.

and negation of harmonious proportions" (Cosh, 1981:27). Gentrification began in the area in the 1950s, and today the process is in a mature stage.

#### **4.3 Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York City**

*"Essentially agrarian in character until the 1860s, Park Slope thereafter began unbuttoning its country-bumpkin togs. With the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, it discarded them altogether. Equally as central to the residential burgeoning of Park Slope as well to do business men were artistic personalities...They continue - along with the core of white-collared, upwardly mobile members of the community - to expect such stimulation in Park Slope as that proffered by the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and Ballet La Danse, both on Seventh Avenue" (Griffin, 1982:23).*

Park Slope is a residential neighbourhood in the Brooklyn Borough of New York City (see Figure 4.4), located 4 miles from Wall Street, Manhattan. It is situated west of Prospect Park, and is bounded to the north by Flatbush Avenue, to the west by 4th Avenue, and to the south by Prospect Expressway (Figure 4.5). Park Slope gets its name from the fact that it is situated on a natural slope<sup>17</sup>, the slope falls gradually down to Gowanus Canal, to the west of 4th Avenue. The most expensive housing is located at the most elevated positions. In terms of size it is 1.5 miles long by 0.75 of a mile wide. The Park Slope area covers 16 census tracts (Figure 4.6), and is located in community district 6. The Long Island Rail Road Flatbush/Atlantic Avenue Station is located to the north-west of Park Slope. It serves as a commuter link to and from suburban Long Island, and acts as the focal station in Brooklyn for many of the subway lines to and from Manhattan. Within the Park Slope area there are three F-

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<sup>17</sup> The natural slope is a result of glaciation, Park Slope and Prospect Park are situated on a terminal moraine. Going towards Prospect Park, Park Slope increases to an elevation of about 180 feet, although ironically the highest place you can go is Brooklyn's Green-wood cemetery (Krase, 1989:10). High elevations are often associated with areas of gentrification, Barnsbury is also located on an elevated area.



Figure 4.4 Park Slope in New York City

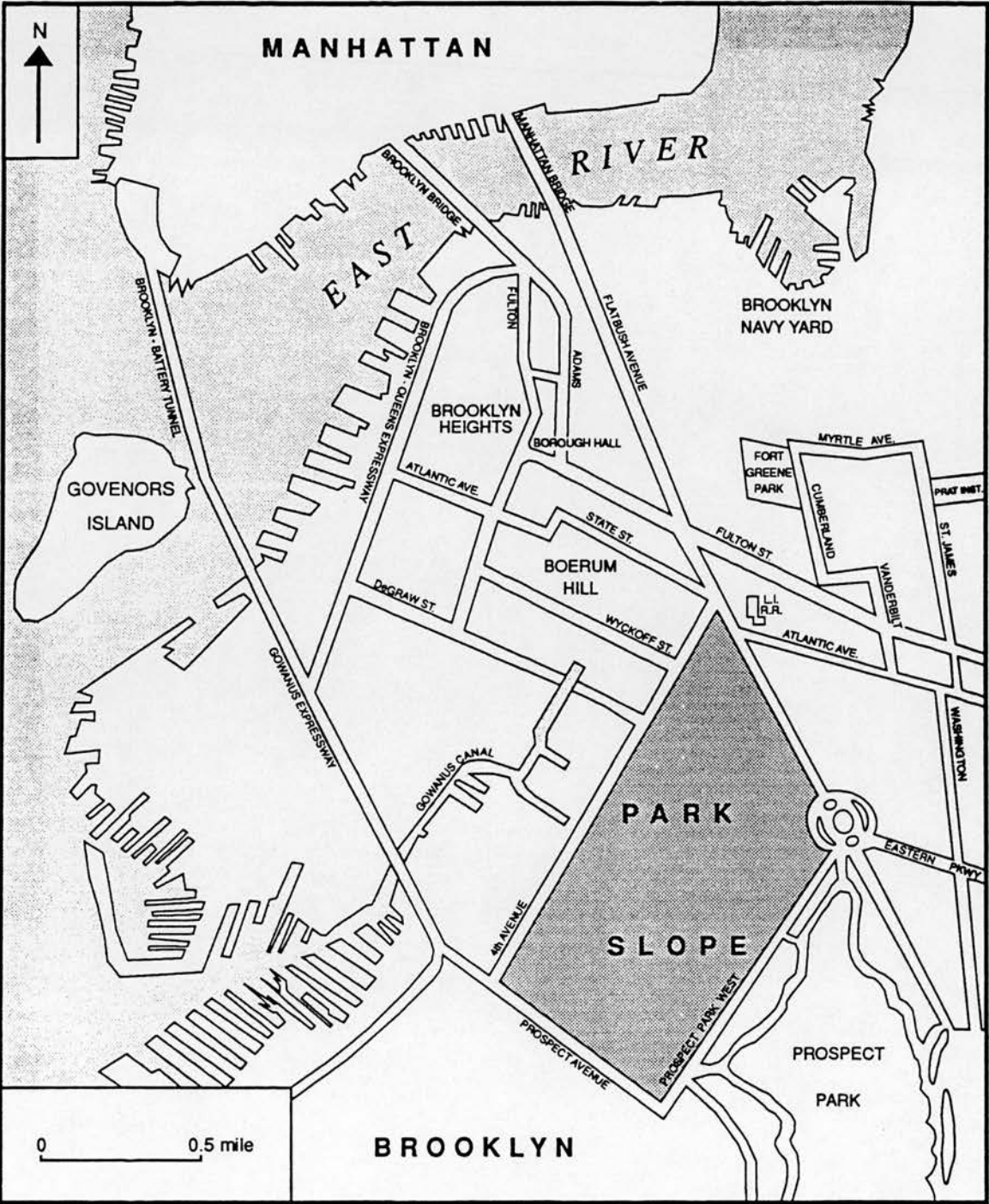


Figure 4.5 Street Map of Park Slope

/// - SOUTH SLOPE  
— - 1973 LANDMARK PRESERVATION



Figure 4.6 Census Tracts Covering Park Slope



line subway stations to the south of the Slope and one D and Q-line subway station on 7th Avenue. It takes approximately 15 minutes to travel from Park Slope to Manhattan by subway. Brooklyn is simultaneously attached to, yet independent from Manhattan. Brooklyn itself has a population of 2.3 million, if separated from New York City it would act as the third largest city in the United States. The wider area of Brooklyn is comprised of a combination of differing ethnic and class based neighbourhoods, and being located off the East River there are a variety of industrial enclaves intermeshed.

Park Slope is an area of brownstones and row houses<sup>18</sup> (Plates 4.7 to 4.11), it contains one of the largest collection of Victorian houses in the United States. Prospect Park adjacent to Park Slope is one of America's greatest urban parks, it has a grand arch at Grand Army Plaza (Plate 4.12) mimicking the Arch de Triomphe. Grand Army Plaza was built in 1865 as part of the design for Prospect Park by Frederick Law Olmstead,

*"Like a crown the Plaza caps Flatbush Avenue at its highest point, and creates a feeling of vastness at the parks narrowest side. Today it is one of the handsomest and most sophisticated spaces in New York City"* (Muir, 1977:2).

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<sup>18</sup> Brownstones are buildings constructed of, or faced with, a soft, close-grained triassic sandstone which weathers as a chocolate brown colour due to the presence of hematite iron-ore. Rowhouses are the United States version of a terraced house in Britain. Row houses date back to ancient Rome, prior to appearing in America they were common along canals in Dutch cities during the middle ages (Draper, 1991:148-149).

Because of these features Park Slope has been characterized as: "Victoriana, a triumphal arch, and yuppies" (Yarrow, 1989:29). Gentrification began in the area in the 1950s<sup>19</sup> and today the process is in a mature stage.

#### **4.4 Fieldwork: Theory into Practice**

In this section I briefly comment on the fieldwork I undertook in London and New York and the difficulties which I encountered.

In my first year of research I spent a week in New York and a week in London in order to make a decision on exactly which areas I would study. I then spent the whole of my second year on fieldwork, six months in New York (October 1991 - March 1992) and six months in London (April 1992 - September 1992).

Armed with my two frameworks and the ideas and concepts I have outlined, I embarked upon what was predominantly a qualitative (see Jacobs, 1993) analysis of gentrification, but with some quantitative elements more especially associated with the marxist framework. For, as Zukin (1988:432) argues it is important for economically determined analyses of the city to give way to a more open analysis which includes culture and politics. Due to the fact that I chose to analyze two case studies of mature gentrification, I adopted a historical profile thus requiring material

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<sup>19</sup> The Brownstone Revival movement began in Brooklyn Heights in the 1950s and spread south to Cobble Hill and in the early 1960s moved to Park Slope. Brownstone was a fashionable material in the late 1840s, Park Slope's brownstone was easily available and cheap, most of it was quarried in the Connecticut River Valley and in New Jersey's Hackensack Valley, the brownstone was brought to Brooklyn by barge up the Gowanus Canal (Muir, 1977:31).

from the 1950s (and indeed earlier) up until the present day. My fieldwork was dominated by archival research, but also included the collection of quantitative data which I later analyzed (see Appendix 1), taped informal semi-structured interviews, informal conversations which were not taped, and some mapping.

Because I was looking at an historical profile of gentrification, archival research was particularly important in that I gained material on the beginnings and formulation of gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope. Journalistic reports and material from organizations active in the process, for example the Civic Council in Park Slope and the Barnsbury Association in Barnsbury, provided sensitive archival material. These formed important local narratives of gentrification in the two areas; they focused on local knowledge, on detail, on the contingent, on personal testimony, and on the direct experience of individuals and communities. These local narratives were richly descriptive and historically important.

Informal semi-structured interviews with realtors were chosen as a fieldwork strategy above questionnaires and formal interviews. The use of questionnaires makes it difficult to gain descriptive commentary and limits the information attained to the questions themselves. Formal interviews were not appropriate most especially in Park Slope because gentrification there is still viewed as politically sensitive. In Barnsbury on the other hand political sensitivity is not a problem, but for comparative purposes I adopted an informal interviewing technique there also.



I hoped to undertake 5 interviews in Park Slope (approximating one fifth of the realtors in the area), but out of 25 phonecalls I only managed to gain 3 interviews. Most people were too busy, not interested, not prepared to discuss racial balances in the area, or, found the term gentrification too politically sensitive. Fortunately the interviews I managed to undertake were with realtors on the three main avenues in the area, i.e. 5th, 6th and 7th Avenues, therefore gaining a spatial balance amongst the locations of the realtors. This is important for realtors in New York and indeed in the United States are very locally based. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one and a half hours and took place in their offices.

In the Summer of 1992 I interviewed three real estate agencies operating in Barnsbury. The number is small not because of refusal rates as in the case of Park Slope, but because the consolidation of the real estate industry in Britain has meant that those real estate people operating in Barnsbury today are new and have little knowledge of gentrification in the early days in the area. I specifically selected and interviewed the oldest operators in the area. The interviews were similar to those in Park Slope, they took place in the real estate offices and lasted approximately 45 minutes to one and a half hours.

I transcribed the interviews. The main aim of the interviews was to get real estate people to comment on past and present gentrification in their areas, and to provide some indication as to the current state of affairs in Barnsbury and Park Slope specifically in terms of the real estate market.



My fieldwork in both Park Slope and Barnsbury also included field observations. In Park Slope I mapped the vacant/abandoned buildings in the area, whilst in Barnsbury I mapped those buildings which were vacant or undergoing renovation in the area. This produced data on property available for gentrification and property undergoing gentrification. In both Park Slope and Barnsbury I studied the architectural features in the areas, photographing some of them (see Appendix 2). I mapped the location of real estate agencies in both areas, providing comparative material on the growth of the real estate industries in Park Slope and Barnsbury. I also attained a sense of place by lingering in both study areas, making observations over a period of time about the residents both racially and socially. I ate, drank and shopped in the areas attaining a sense of the ambience of Park Slope and Barnsbury.

My fieldwork in New York for the most part went according to plan. There were certain things that I was unable to follow up, but in compensation other but not necessarily alternative roads opened up. For example, I was unable to gain access to tax arrears data in the format I needed. Unfortunately City Planning deleted those files with tax arrears data because the data was inaccurate. It would have taken too long to gain access to tax arrears data manually. Moreover, New York City Department of City Planning has verbally criticized (personal conversation with NYCDCP Planner Dorothy Bruce, Spring, 1992) Smith's usage of its tax arrears data for theory construction. Bruce said that Smith's theory construction was based on inaccurate tax arrears data which ignores city-owned buildings therefore producing a distorted

picture. Despite this O'Hanlon (1982) provided some tax arrears calculations for Park Slope which I was able to use.

I had difficulties in ascertaining the relative importance of certain Federal Programmes in providing finance for gentrification in Park Slope, the information was just not available on the number and dollar amount of these programmes.

In terms of the theoretical application of my frameworks, capital in the marxist framework is an abstract entity and was difficult to empiricize. Frequently I could only allude to its movements for statistics were either too vague or unmanagable in terms of data collection time limits.

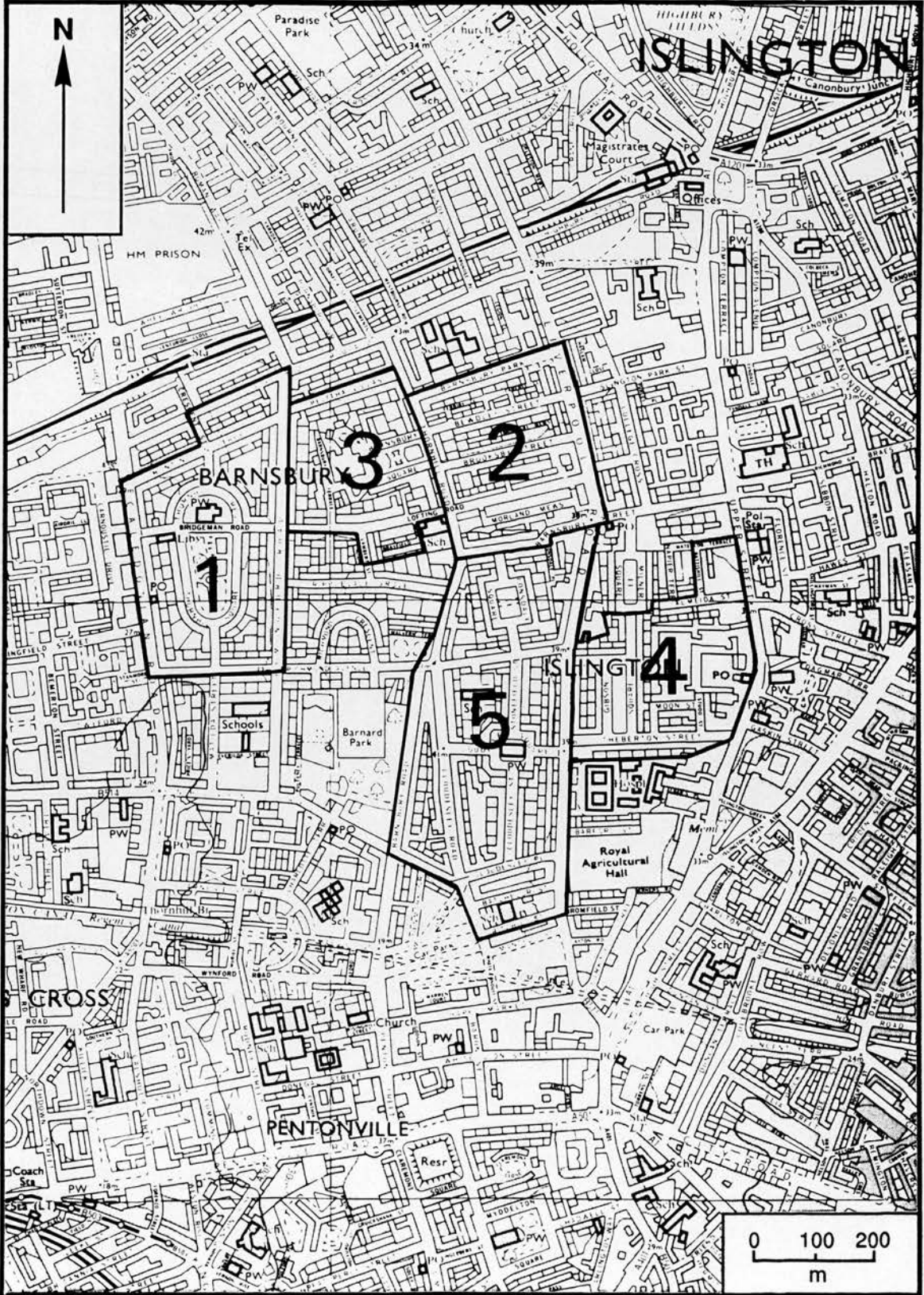
Many difficulties were encountered in my Barnsbury fieldwork. Many documents and statistical profiles were available from the London Research Centre, but since it has been privatized all items are charged for, from a nominal fee of £30 upwards. I did not have the funding to cover these costs, as such much information was made unavailable. Unlike in New York City where files of property transactions were readily available (see Appendix 1), I could not gain access to property transactions information in London. This is because the Land Registry was charging £11 per property entry, thus it would have cost thousands of pounds to get the data I wanted:

*"In Paris, New York, Oslo or Rome, if people want to know who owns a particular building, they can look it up in a central register. In London, indeed throughout the country, there is nowhere they can turn for the information" (Green 1986:7).*

Other problems were associated with data collection and comparison in Barnsbury. The enumeration districts were not comparable in any census year 1961-1991. To overcome this I mapped areas of similar enumeration district coverage, and selected five of these areas for comparative purposes (see Figure 4.7). Moreover, the Barnsbury ward does not cover the entire study area, this made the usage of census data especially difficult in general and comparative terms. The boundaries of the Barnsbury ward were altered from the 1971 to 1981 census, parts of the 1971 Thornhill ward and Pentonville ward have been incorporated into the 1981 Barnsbury ward. Likewise borough data has been difficult to compare, for the Borough of Islington also changed its boundaries from 1961-1971, when the Metropolitan Boroughs of Islington and Finsbury were combined to form the London Borough of Islington. As a result of all these problems, part of the empirical analysis of Barnsbury is less stringent than that of Park Slope.

In the next two chapters I go on to illustrate gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope working through the marxist and postmodernist frameworks. The collated information should provide a comparative picture of the process of gentrification in both areas and some indication as to the complementarities and productive tensions between the marxist and postmodernist interpretations.

Figure 4.7 Micro Study Areas in Barnsbury





## **CHAPTER 5 A COMPARISON OF GENTRIFICATION IN LONDON AND NEW YORK THROUGH A MARXIST FRAMEWORK**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I compare gentrification in Barnsbury (Figures 4.1 and 4.2) and Park Slope (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) in terms of those ideas set out in the marxist framework described in Chapter 3.2. I have divided the chapter into five sections: uneven development, the production of gentrified property, real estate market and trends, capital market and trends, and class differentials and class struggle. These sections illustrate an economically determined and production based analysis of gentrification.

Throughout the sections I compare Barnsbury and Park Slope systematically so that the notion of an Atlantic Gap is investigated, moving between the national, city and neighbourhood spheres tracing the relevant information. I wait until Chapter 7 to offer some conclusions on the complementarities and productive tensions between the marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification.

### **5.2 Uneven Development**

In this section I look at the movements of capital (differentiation and equalization) associated with gentrification in terms of uneven development. I illustrate the processes and factors associated with these movements in both London and New York. I discuss capital switching in terms of the relationship between suburbanization and the inner-city, the globalization or internationalization of capital in London and

New York, and the operation of the value gap and the rent gap in Barnsbury and Park Slope respectively.

### **5.2.1 Capital Switching: Suburbanization and the Inner-City**

The presence of good routes to the city influenced the development of Barnsbury as a garden suburb in the C19th:

*"Just as in the mid-west of America the cattle trails blazed the routes which the railway and later the motorways would follow, so too in Islington the story of the main roads is the story of the cattle routes" (Roberts, 1975:176).*

The first trams arrived in Islington in 1870 and the underground reached the Angel station in 1901. The continued development of the railways led to a commuter shift to suburbs further out of London, and as a result:

*"A combination of class fear and railway engineering turned a vast stretch of residential London into a no-mans land...Camden Town, Holloway, Islington, were abandoned to the hopelessly entrenched working class. Its only in the last decade or so that a new middle class, trendy and pioneer, have replaced these buffer areas, between the nobs and the mob of N1 and NW1" (Raban, 1974).*

Suburbanization began in London during the inter war years. London was expanding rapidly, the working classes followed the middle classes out of central London and into areas such as Barnsbury. As the working classes infiltrated, the middle classes moved out:

*"In the same way as White Americans have fled to the suburbs when the blacks moved in down the road, the rich occupants of the Angel, Canonbury and Barnsbury left their houses, which rapidly went into multi-occupation" (Pitt, 1977:5).*

As a result the population of Islington declined from 415,326 in 1911 to 160,890 in 1981, and has only recently begun to increase (see Table 5.1).



**Table 5.1 Population Decline in the Borough of Islington 1901-1991**

| Year | Total Population |
|------|------------------|
| 1901 | 436,701          |
| 1911 | 415,326          |
| 1921 | 406,732          |
| 1931 | 391,683          |
| 1941 | 239,870          |
| 1951 | 271,252          |
| 1961 | 261,853          |
| 1971 | 201,875          |
| 1981 | 160,890          |
| 1991 | 164,686          |

Source: U.K. Census.

The main impetus behind these population transfers was the Greater London Plan of 1944. Formulated by Abercrombie the plan became the blueprint for the post-war reconstruction of London, it was favoured by the Labour Government as a means of solving the housing crisis. The aim was to decentralize industry and then people would follow (Abercrombie, 1945:30-33). Abercrombie's plan was an institutionalized example of the valorization of the suburbs and the devalorization of the inner-city. In 1952 the Town Development Act exported another 30,000 Londoners to expanded towns, for example, Bury St. Edmunds. This plan contributed significantly to the deterioration of inner London<sup>20</sup>. Recognizing this, new town policy was reversed by the Greater London Council in the late 1960s.

<sup>20</sup> Inner London was defined by the now defunct Greater London Council and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys as the 13 boroughs of the City of London.

Other factors influenced the devalorization of the inner-city and the valorization of the suburbs in London, for example, the Building Society movement changed in the 1920s. Previously it had loaned money to private landlords to build new houses, but landlords no-longer wanted to invest due to the restrictions caused by rent controls, declining profit margins and increasing interest rates especially post-war. So building societies looked for customers elsewhere. With increases in taxation levels the middle classes realized that if they took out a mortgage on a house they would soon off set their interest repayments against their incomes and gain from tax relief. The middle classes bought property in the suburbs and the inner-city became increasingly slum-like (Green, 1979:32). Between the wars there had been some slum clearance, it was during this time that the Barnsbury (council) Estate south of Copenhagen Street was built, later to be extended by the Greater London Council. In post-war London the demand for housing was greater than the available supply, but the pressure caused by demand was differential throughout London. In Barnsbury the pressure was great because of its large stock of private rented accommodation located minutes from central London. Those demanding housing in Barnsbury were too poor to buy and did not qualify for council housing. Statistically Barnsbury was one of the areas of greatest housing stress in London. The larger property was subdivided for private rent, but the style of the property made shared accommodation more feasible than self contained accommodation. In 1961 62 per cent of Barnsbury's households lived in shared accommodation in comparison to only 30 per cent in the county of London (London Borough of Islington, 1966:6). In a 1968 pilot survey in Matilda Street, Barnsbury, by the London Borough of Islington (1969:13), out of 160 households

interviewed; 127 had no access to a bath, 138 shared a toilet, 15 had no kitchen sink, and 25 were living in overcrowded conditions. Barnsbury was an area of severe housing stress as this poignant story from the London Borough of Islington's (1969:104) Matilda Street Survey illustrates:

*"one old lady of nearly 80 could only manage to go to the outside w.c. by going down the 4 or 5 steps on her backside. The highest hopes she had were that the council were going to provide her with a commode".*

The degree of overcrowding in Barnsbury illustrates the housing stress found in the 1960s, the decline in overcrowding is directly associated with gentrification. In 1951, 4 per cent of households had more than 2 people to a room (the average was 0.95 people to a room). In 1961 the average had declined to 0.90 (the average in Islington was 0.87), 20.8 per cent of households lived in rooms of more than 1.5 people. In 1971, 12.4 per cent lived in rooms of more than 1.5 people. In 1981, 6.4 per cent lived in households of more than 1.5 people to a room; and, by 1991, only 1.8 per cent lived in households with more than 1.5 people per room (U.K. Census). In 1961, 13 per cent of the population of Barnsbury had been born in Ireland, Malta, Cyprus and the British Carribean. In Islington Special Area 3, i.e. in Barnsbury in 1966, 4 per cent of the population had been born in the Carribean, 3.6 per cent in Cyprus or Malta, 1.7 per cent in Africa and 1.2 per cent in India and Pakistan. In Barnsbury the immigrants' housing conditions were appalling; two Irish maintenance men shared one room with no sink, no bath, no hot water, and only a shared water tap outside. A couple from the West Indies rented two furnished rooms for £5, they had three children and were expecting another; the cooker and the kitchen sink were on the landing, they had no hot water nor access to a bath, and only a shared toilet (London

Borough of Islington, 1969:107-108). But by 1972 Power reported (from fieldwork) that the Irish and Commonwealth immigrants were no longer living in the area, for many of these furnished rooms had been the first to be converted. Where in 1966 Lonsdale Square had been half occupied by black residents, by 1972 only two houses had black residents.

Also embedded in British inner-city disinvestment was the 1960s shift from urban redevelopment to urban renewal which meant a major cut in the expenditure on inner-cities. This change meant that the improvement of inner-city areas became the job of the private market, i.e. owner occupiers and landlords (Williams, 1978:31). After 1976, inner-city regeneration and renewal programmes tried to attract industry back to London, a reversal of the decentralization mentioned earlier. This increased in 1981 when the Labour party gained control of the Greater London Council led by Ken Livingstone. For example, the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) was set up to revive industry in London (Humphries and Taylor, 1986:166).

Were similar processes operative in the United States at this time? Like Barnsbury, Park Slope developed as one of the first suburbs of New York City in the mid to late C19th<sup>21</sup>. Around 1865 horse car lines had reached several Brooklyn neighbourhoods, this made possible the development of Park Slope, for people needed a viable way of getting into Manhattan. The horse car brought its passengers to the Fulton Street

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<sup>21</sup> The first conceptualization of suburban living in the United States was on farmland on the Heights of Brooklyn (Carlyle Morris, 1975:21).

ferry which crossed the East River to Manhattan. The residential development in the 1880s occurred in two separate sections to the north and to the south. The north was settled as an extension of the upper class district around Fulton Street and Flatbush Avenue. The housing constructed was 3 and 4 storey, one-family brownstones. The southern area of Park Slope was settled instead by the working class who could reach the Gowanus Canal by horse car. The housing took the form of mainly 2/3 storey wood frames (see Muir, 1977:35 and O'Hanlon, 1982).

Around this time the real estate market in the area was known as Prospect Hill, and the highest prices were to the north. For example, in 1886 the average cost of a house in the north was \$20-30,000, in the middle of the Slope \$12-20,000, and in the south \$2,500-6,000 (The New York Union, March 25th 1886, see O'Hanlon, 1982). In 1888 8th Avenue was compared with Broadway in Manhattan but was seen as less expensive:

*"...on 8th Ave., four storey brownstone residences, we sell for \$28,000 and \$30,000. our properties are the best investment being about 50% less than New York"* (New York Herald, June 10th 1888, see O'Hanlon, 1982).

The interdependence of the two cities was visibly symbolized by the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 and legally by the incorporation of Brooklyn into Greater New York in 1898. The opening of the bridge encouraged an influx of prosperous merchants and lawyers into Park Slope, most of whom commuted to Lower Manhattan (Park Slope Historic District Designation Report, 1973:10). In 1908 the subway opened under the East River connecting downtown Brooklyn with Manhattan, more importantly by 1915 the 4th Avenue line connected Park Slope with

Manhattan. The subway caused people to locate further away from the water front and therein many houses were converted to multi-family occupancy.

The worker of the 1920s found in Brooklyn an updated version of the suburban ideal of the 1820s; a home for the family in healthy, uncongested surroundings, within commuting distance from the factories and offices of Manhattan (Ment, 1979:72). Brooklyn's population doubled in the period 1900 to 1940, from 1,167,000 to 2,698,000, a product of immigration, by 1930 one half of all the adults in Brooklyn were foreign born. The main waves of immigration were as follows: 1830s and 1840s - the Irish, 1860s to 1880s - Germans, 1880s - southern Italians and Jews from Russia and Central Europe, and 1890 - the Irish again (Seiden-Miller, 1979:27). Suburbanization affected Park Slope early, in the first decade of the C20th, when the middle classes moved to the then suburb of Flatbush. The brownstones they left behind in Park Slope became "genteel" rooming houses and later low class rooming houses with the advent of the Depression in the 1930s (Ment, 1979:76). These were occupied predominantly by the Irish and Italian community. Reminiscent of later processes the landlords closed these buildings or let them decline into disrepair, and in the 1930s social planners had begun to call Park Slope a "slum" (Ment, 1979:76). In the 1940s and 1950s approximately 75 per cent of Park Slope's housing stock was rooming houses with absentee landlords (Watkins, 1984). In 1950 out of 25,191 housing units in Park Slope 3,444 reported dilapidation and/or no private bath or running water (U.S. Census, 1950). The north-east and eastern sections near Prospect Park retained their high rent status, yet this area experienced the largest amount of



subdivision. The number of apartments increased 1934-1950, from 21,946 to 27,179; 60 per cent of these were located in the north-east of Park Slope and within three blocks of Prospect Park. Basically the decline in rents due to suburbanization and the increase in blue collar workers in the area caused the rental market to expand through subdivision in the higher rent areas in the north and north-east of Park Slope (Justa, 1984). In 1960 out of 29,126 housing units, 4,887 were deteriorating and 526 were dilapidated (U.S. Census, 1960).

In the United States up until World War 2 less than half the population were owner occupiers, and less than half the available housing was single family units. The years 1948-1960 saw an increase in homeownership following tax subsidies for owner occupancy. Indeed since the New Deal there had been attempts to increase owner occupancy in the hope that it would act as a social stabilizer (Berry, 1980:11-12). At this time, as in Britain, there was a bias towards investment in new construction, rather than investment in old property, this was a function of federal tax codes. Suburbanization was part and parcel of the homeownership move in the United States, as in Britain, highway construction facilitated the process. The construction of the Long Island Expressway opened up Long Island to the affluent Brooklynites (see Seiden-Miller, 1979:26), fuelled by the American fascination for the automobile and the influence of Robert Moses (chairman of the Triborough Commission) who emphasized bridges and highways rather than mass transit during the New Deal. The population of Park Slope fell by 23,484 people between 1960-1990 (see Table 5.2) and Park Slope lost a total of 8 per cent of its housing units 1960-1980.

**Table 5.2 Population Decline in Park Slope 1960-1990**

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 1960 | 79,386     |
| 1970 | 72,933     |
| 1980 | 58,257     |
| 1990 | 55,902     |

Source: U.S. Census.

There was a "white flight" from Brooklyn of some 682,000 whites between 1940 and 1970 (Seiden-Miller, 1979:26-32). In 1950 Park Slope was 99 per cent white, by 1990 this had dropped to 52 per cent (Source: U.S. Census). The white flight to the suburbs coincided with an increase in Brooklyn's black community. For example, by 1970 Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is directly north-east of Park Slope, had more blacks than Harlem. After the urban riots of the 1960s "Bed-Stuy" became the new American symbol of poverty and racism for the black community. As a result of the white flight, in 1950 to 1970 Park Slope saw the emergence of a dual housing market according to colour. Cheaper housing and dereliction allowed blacks and hispanics into the area<sup>22</sup>. The opening of the Verrazano Bridge in 1965 enabled more white flight, this time to Staten Island. So from 1940 to 1970 Brooklyn gained 549,000 blacks and lost 682,000 whites<sup>23</sup>. In Park Slope however whites including Italians and

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<sup>22</sup> Note that at the same time pioneer gentrifiers were moving in.

<sup>23</sup> Yet most people do not realize that a black flight actually preceded the white flight of the 1950s. Upper class blacks moved away from the poorer blacks to, for example, Crown Heights, Brownsville and East Flatbush (Seiden-Miller, 1979:32). Then following traditional succession models blacks moved into north Park Slope in the late 1960s, many of these pushed across from the ghetto area of the 1920s, i.e. Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street. During that time the Puerto Ricans had acted as a buffer between the blacks and the whites. Park Slope though did not follow racial shifts similar to those in New York City as a whole, for by 1970 the Puerto Rican population in Park Slope was larger than its black population.

Jews were still the majority. Frank Torres resident of Park Slope summarizes the events of this time;

*"a lot of people around here were civil servants - policemen, token clerks - and around the middle '60s their salaries became nicer, they started making \$15,000 a year and they really thought they had made the big time and right away they had to buy a house with a garage and chimneys...They went to Long Island and New Jersey - if they went to New Jersey they really wanted to go to California - and after the Verrazanno Bridge was built they went to Staten Island, but they all left at the same time, when the blacks and Puerto Ricans moved in during the early '60s. That chased even the poor white people out. And the landlords who were getting \$45 to \$50 rents from working class people found out they could get \$150 to \$175 from welfare recipients. real estate people milked them with welfare recipients until they got as much money as they could out of it - the investment back, plus some profit - and then they let'em go. They sold them to new people with FHA loans, and then there was an FHA scandal, people lost their loans, walked away from everything, and then there were tons of fires, insurance-type fires" (Hodenfield, 1986:8).*

In 1965 The New York World Telegram called Park Slope, "The run down area of downtown Brooklyn" (Watkins, 1984b). Crime and drug dealing perpetuated the image of Park Slope as a slum, Michael Eugenio remembers:

*"If you had anything worthwhile in your house, you had break-ins, they'd rob you blind. Your car wasn't safe in the street, tires would be missing, batteries would be missing" (Hodenfield, 1986:8).*

In 1972 there was vicious gang warfare in Park Slope between the Italian "Golden Guineas" and the Puerto Ricans who moved into the area, some of whom set up dope rackets. In the summer of 1972 dozens of people were assaulted, an 18 year old had his legs blown off with a double barrelled shotgun, a police car was overturned and hit with molotov cocktails. In 1975 there were similar incidents (Hamill, 1978:36-40). O'Hanlon comments on the explosion of non-local narcotics trafficking along 5th Avenue between Sackett and Degraw Streets. The proliferation of the market brought an expansion in the number of local addicts and thieves (Hodenfield, 1986:8). Illegal

gambling dens were set up in abandoned buildings, they flourished in the North Slope in the late 1960s (Watkins, 1984a). Squatters and drug dealers moved into the abandoned buildings in the area; candy stores did business behind bulletproof shields:

*"Right across from where I live I watched them sell, shoot up, keel over from overdoses, and there were shootings - one night a car came up the street and there were at least 25 gunshots, everybody diving under cars. We were prisoners in our houses and we started fighting"* (Lew Smith of Berkeley Place, Hodenfield, 1986:9).

The inability of many merchants to recover from the resulting property damage contributed to vacancies and dilapidation which compounded the residual image of crime left by the riots (Watkins, 1984).

In summary, both Barnsbury and Park Slope were born as suburbs, ironically it was further waves of suburbanization which were to cause the devalorization of the two areas. Government policies in London and New York tended to decentralize people and capital, but in Park Slope a racial dimension was also relevant.

### **5.2.2 The Globalization/Internationalization of Capital**

Now I want to turn to that part of the marxist framework which considers the development of London and New York as global or world cities. This development was brought about by the internationalization of capital. As a result the finance and service industries increased rapidly, attracting people back to the city, to live and work, after twenty or more years of decentralization.

Before being redefined as a global city London reached its peak as world capital of trade and industry in the 1950s, with the end of the old imperial era and a decline in empire and commonwealth trade in the late 1950s. London emerged as a global city thereafter in the 1960s, slightly earlier than New York, a result of its "milder regulatory climate" which,

*"brought many financial operations from New York to London in the mid-1960s, and existing facilities for international currency trading helped London to become the centre of eurodollar<sup>24</sup> markets in the 1970s" (Zukin, 1992a:196).*

London is ideally located in terms of time zones for trade with other countries around the world (Lenon, 1987:57), which strengthens its position as a global city. The number of foreign banks in London increased from 163 in 1970 to 521 in 1989 (King, 1990; Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin, 1989). During the period 1968-1987 the number of staff in foreign banks and securities houses increased six-fold from 9,000 to 72,000. In the seven years, 1981-1988 the percentage of the labour force working in banking, insurance and finance increased from 15.9 per cent to over 20 per cent (The Banker, 1986 and 1987, in King, 1990). London became the main centre for the international eurocurrency business, eurobond transactions, foreign exchange, insurance, fund management and corporate financial advice (Pryke, 1991:205). During 1975-1988 the international assets of banks in London increased from \$184 billion to \$1,124 billion, Tokyo is now challenging this position (Bank of England

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<sup>24</sup> The development of the eurodollar market in the 1960s in London occurred due to the expansion of American companies into Europe in the 1950s, there was then an excess of dollars in Europe. There were restrictions on the creation of dollar deposits in the United States, therein a demand for a "dollar deposit market" in Europe emerged. Britain's more liberal regime made London an attractive base (Budd, 1992:264).

Quarterly Bulletin, 1989:517-518). The City of London's function as a banking and finance centre became more pronounced with the deregulation of the stock exchange in 1986 and the full internationalization of securities dealing (see Pryke, 1991:206-207):

*"The City was to become the hub not of a culturally familiar, slow-paced, empire-orientated regime of trade finance but of a new fast-moving capitalism in which the City itself was to become equally international. As capital was expanding across the globe the financial system which was feeding that growth had to change, too"* (Pryke, 1991:210).

Accountancy, law, business and the function of general clearing house for information around the world was concentrated in the "golden square mile" around the Bank of England, but since 1984 these functions have expanded west and east via Docklands. Unlike in New York the national government in the United Kingdom has pushed the City's eastward expansion (Zukin, 1992a:195). London's office rental values have always been the highest in the world, in 1987 they were 30 per cent higher than those in New York City (Hillier Parker, 1987, cited in King, 1990). Between 1980-1985 8.6 million square feet of office space was built in the City. The "Big Bang" created some of the demand for extra office floor space. After deregulation capital was given more opportunity to feed the growth of London. With this, property investment from overseas increased substantially (see Table 5.3) furthering the notion of London as a global city.



**Table 5.3 Direct Property Investment in London from Overseas (£m current prices)**

| Year   | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Amount | 100  | 80   | 120  | 50   | 80   | 95   | 155  | 295  | 1400 | 2000 |

Source: Budd, 1992:274, Table 11.3, data from Estates Gazette.

The City of London became an arena for international capital. International capital ignored the needs of the local population, indeed King (1990) argues that the abolition of the Labour controlled Greater London Council in 1986 was one sacrifice which London made for its new status as a global city. The government backed international capital; for example, the City of London Local Plan, 1986, relaxed controls over new building, helping the City to remain a major office centre (Lenon, 1987:57). The development of London as a global city aided those areas near to the city, such as Barnsbury, by providing a pool of white collar jobs, and by providing an excess of capital for property investment, much of this from overseas.

According to Scanlon (1989:84) the turnaround for New York City was 1976 and its emergence as a global city occurred thereafter from a near devastating 7 year decline. The emergence of New York as a global city coincided with the 1975-1977 fiscal crisis in New York City. During 1977-1987 in the aftermath of fiscal crisis the city produced almost half a million new jobs. Under Mayor Ed Koch the municipal workforce increased by 25 per cent, the growth being locally constituted for central government. As a global city New York found economic power in business, advertizing, public relations, and computing. Banking expanded due to the role played

by United States money centre banks and particularly those New York banks facilitating the recycling of OPEC's petrodollars, alongside the sudden influx of international banking firms. New York became the centre for several global financial markets: for trade financing, Eurobonds and United States Treasury debt; for commodities, foreign exchange, and futures and options as well as in the stock market function (Scanlon, 1989:84-85). The number of foreign banks in New York City increased from 144 in 1976 to 392 in 1990 (Scanlon, 1989:86; The Port Authority of New York, March 1991:22) catching up with London the historic leader. In the 1980s New York looked for expertise and financial backing in unusual operations, this caused a concentration of asset-rich Japanese banks and world wide institutional investors. After New York became a global city, during the period 1976-1980, \$1,418 million of capital was allocated to the inner-city, which includes Brooklyn, whilst only \$395 million was allocated to the suburbs (Table 5.4). This illustrates how New York's transition to a global city aided inner-city reinvestment.

**Table 5.4 Economic Development Funding (\$ millions) in New York 1976-1980**

|                                | New York City | New York Suburbs |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Direct Grants and Loans</b> |               |                  |
| Federal                        | 246           | 53               |
| State                          | 460           | 45               |
| Local                          | -             | -                |
| Sub Total                      | 706           | 98               |
| <b>Loan Incentives</b>         |               |                  |
| Federal                        | n.a           | n.a              |
| State                          | 260           | 106              |
| Local                          | 243           | n.a              |
| Sub Total                      | 503           | 106              |
| <b>Loan Guarantees</b>         |               |                  |
| Federal                        | 209           | 191              |
| State                          | -             | -                |
| Local                          | -             | -                |
| Sub Total                      | 209           | 191              |
| Total                          | 1418          | 395              |

Source: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, 1982.

The development agencies dealing with New York's economy chose office development to stimulate economic expansion. The revival of Manhattan in terms of its international economy and booming real estate spilled over to revive the surrounding boroughs, alongside this people moved from Manhattan and gave a boost to residential renovation in Brooklyn, affecting the strength and momentum of its revitalization:

*"It is our judgement that these two external forces - the INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY OF MANHATTAN [my emphasis] and the influx of new immigrants - will continue to be the most important factors in shaping the future of the borough [Brooklyn] just as they have in the past" (Municipal Research Institute, 1984:49).*

More recently employment levels have again plummeted, a recession emerged in October 1987 with a corresponding plunge in stock prices. A fall in employment and income in New York City's Wall Street and banking sectors followed in 1988 and 1989. Nevertheless, the economy continued to grow over the years 1987-1989 (Fainstein, 1992:129). The Gulf crisis caused a rapid escalation in oil prices, which pushed up the inflation rate in 1990 to the highest since 1982. In 1990 employment in New York City declined by 44,500 jobs, the largest employment loss in 14 years; 30,000 job cutbacks on Wall Street alone occurred from late 1989 to early 1990 (The Port Authority of New York, March 1991). There has been a national recession since the first half of 1990. Another fiscal crisis also emerged in 1989-1991 (Fainstein, 1992). Similar to the 1975-1977 fiscal crisis, it was related to a downturn in the city's prime export sectors which reduced tax revenues. The city's economic dependence on

the financial industry became apparent due to the effect of that industry on the tax base (Fainstein, 1992:131).

In summary, both London and New York became global cities with slightly different emphases. This development provided some capital, but more importantly, the incentive to reinvest in areas such as Barnsbury and Park Slope.

### **5.2.3 The Value Gap and the Rent Gap**

Alongside the macro uneven development of London and New York into global cities, structural processes of micro uneven development were at work which led to the revalorization of Barnsbury and Park Slope. I illustrate these processes of local uneven development in terms of Hamnett and Randolph's (1984,1986) value gap and Smith's (1979a) rent gap.

Tenurial transformation is an important feature of the value gap (see Chapter 2.2.1.2) and of micro uneven development in Barnsbury. Tenurial transformation has been nowhere near as rapid or extensive in the United States as in Britain. In the United States the level of owner occupation was already 47 per cent by 1900, and 65 per cent by 1976. The private rent sector declined from 53 per cent in 1900 to 35 per cent in 1976. Britain on the other hand had a 90 per cent private rent sector and 10 per cent owner occupied sector in 1914. By 1981 owner occupation was 56 per cent, public housing 31 per cent and private rent a mere 13 per cent (Hamnett and Randolph, 1986:122).

This rapid tenurial transformation is particularly striking when we look at data for Islington (Table 5.5) and Barnsbury (Table 5.6) and reflects how quickly these locations became converted into owner occupation and gentrification. In Islington 1961-1991, owner occupied and council housing increased significantly, whilst both private rent categories declined significantly.

**Table 5.5 Tenurial Transformation in Islington 1961-1991**

| Tenure (%)       | Year |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | 1961 | 1966 | 1971 | 1975 | 1981 | 1991 |
| Owner Occupier   | 10.9 | 13.2 | 13.4 | 21.3 | 17.0 | 26.7 |
| Council          | 16.9 | 19.9 | 28.7 | 34.0 | 55.6 | 48.2 |
| Furnished Rent   | 53.7 | 46.0 | 37.2 | 28.7 | 9.2  | 8.6  |
| Unfurnished Rent | 15.7 | 15.8 | 19.2 | 16.0 | 8.2  | 4.0  |

Source: U.K. Census

Note: The 1966 data is based on a 10% sample, the 1961-1991 data is based on a 100% sample. The 1975 data is from Pitt (1977:12)

In Barnsbury, like in Islington as a whole, owner occupied and council housing increased significantly, and both private rent categories declined. Indeed unfurnished rented declined from 61 per cent in 1961 to just 3 per cent in 1991.



**Table 5.6 Tenorial Transformation in Barnsbury 1961-1991**

| Tenure (%)       | Year |      |      |      |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 |
| Owner Occupied   | 7.0  | 14.7 | 19.0 | 28.9 |
| Council          | 15.0 | 18.7 | 56.0 | 48.7 |
| Furnished Rent   | 14.0 | 16.8 | 7.1  | 7.7  |
| Unfurnished Rent | 61.0 | 48.4 | 6.8  | 3.0  |

Source: U.K. Census.

Note: The data is based on a 100% sample. The Barnsbury ward altered between 1971 and 1981.

The value gap is an important factor in the tenorial transformation from private renting to owning which took place in this part of inner London from the 1950s onwards. Tenorial transformation included; the sale of private rented, often multi-occupied accommodation into single family ownership, the sale of purpose-built rented blocks of flats, and, flat conversions (Hamnett, 1989). In 1971 the government produced a White Paper titled "Fair Deal for Housing", providing the government's views on owner occupation:

*"Home ownership is the most rewarding form of house tenure. It satisfies a deep and natural desire on the part of the householder to have independent control of the house that shelters him and his family. It gives him greatest possible security against the loss of his home; and particularly against price changes that may threaten his ability to keep it. If the householder buys his house on mortgage, he builds up by steady saving, a capital asset for him and his dependents. In this country the existence of a strong building society movement helps him to realize these advantages"* (Boddy, 1980:19-20).

It was the value gap and its attendant tenorial transformation which was the main producer of gentrification in both Islington and Barnsbury. The Milner Holland

Report (1965) drew attention to those factors relevant to tenurial transformation in inner London<sup>25</sup>, for example abusive landlords, improvement grants, the problems caused by the 1957 Rent Act, and the increasing polarization between rich and poor in terms of housing conditions.

The value gap became important in Barnsbury in the late 1950s and especially in the 1960s, for landlords were getting a decreasing return on their tenanted property. Meanwhile developers were realizing capital gains of around £20,000 by buying up tenanted property, evicting the tenants and selling it in a vacant state. Moreover, the middle classes were a captive market and building societies were releasing more funds (Pitt, 1977:9). The turning point for Barnsbury was associated with the 1957 Rent Act (see Green, 1979:30-39, for a comprehensive summary of rent controls and security of tenures and their effects on landlords before 1957), which decontrolled unfurnished tenancies during a time of increasing homeownership. Before the Rent Act all rents were controlled at an arbitrary level. The Rent Act was introduced to alleviate the poor condition of housing and its poor investment value. It allowed the landlord to change the market price of any property let after the Act, and those tenants with security of tenure lost their security if they moved out of their controlled tenancies. The Act made it legal, in London houses with a rateable value of over £40, to give most rent controlled tenants 6 months to quit after a "standstill period" of 15 months, or they could increase the rent. In other words it became legal to empty

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<sup>25</sup> See Hamnett and Randolph, 1988, Chapter 3, for information on the decline of landlordism and how this formed a background to the creation of the value gap in London.

houses. Barnsbury and Islington had a very high percentage of private rented accommodation, as such the effects of rent decontrol were particularly prominent. In the 1950s the long established property companies were selling out to new and smaller companies, for example the Church Commissioners sold off over 35,000 properties between 1955-1965 in Islington because they were uneconomic and their slum conditions had become an embarrassment (Ferris, 1972:22).

During the 1960s, a period of rapid tenurial transformation, Barnsbury suffered many cases of winkling, where tenants were forced to leave because of bribery and harassment. Ironically the red-lining of pre-1919 houses and converted leasehold flats prevented the process of winkling from happening earlier, for there has been winkling ever since there has been security of tenure (Green, 1986:74). With relaxations on security of tenure, winkling began in earnest in the 1960s. The 1960 Building Society Act also helped in that restrictions on the amount building societies could lend to property companies, meant that there was more money for owner occupiers. Therefore building societies began to provide mortgages on older houses and converted flats. At first pressure was placed on tenants in furnished flats who were offered anything from £50 to £5,000 to leave their accommodation, many of these were immigrants (Pitt, 1977:9). As Barnsbury gentrified further most of the immigrants were pushed out:

*"Islington's very mixed as it is, but Barnsbury is more white than anything else, there probably isn't a great mix here"* (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

In a report titled: "David and Goliath", Power (1973) looked at the aggressive actions of property developers in Barnsbury. Power recites the story of the Redsprings Property Company. In the late 1960s Redsprings launched a property empire by buying Stonefield Street, part of Cloudesley Square and Liverpool Road from the old landlords the Dove Brothers. This property was bought for less than £2,000, in a vacant state it would be worth £10,000-12,000. They had to remove the tenants to realize this profit. Tenants were bribed with sums of £250-900, some moved to, for example, Thamesmead, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City, others were rehoused by Islington Borough Council. Power cites some cases of the harassment of those tenants who remained. One resident, Emily Thomson had lived at 29 Cloudesley Square for 31 years. Redsprings purchased her building in 1969 with only three sitting tenants, two of these left with money in their pockets. Emily Thomson was offered several flats in a worse condition and with higher rents by Ian Fairweather, Redsprings' winkler, she refused to move. Emily Thomson managed to remain until more suitable accommodation was found in Liverpool Road, but only with the support of South West Islington's Tenants Union and its lawyer. Redsprings made £8,000 profit, approximately 200 per cent profit a year:

*"Properly done, conversions are the next best thing to counterfeiting for making money"* (London Property Letter, cited in Counter Information Services, 1973:42).

The Times (1973) referred to another example of winkling and property speculation in Barnsbury. Redsprings bought most of Stonefield Street from the Dove Brothers.

Since buying the property no repairs were carried out by the new landlords; one resident, Raymond Spreadbury said,

*"In this house the rain pours through the ceiling; 95% of the tenanted houses in this street are the same. The basement has been empty for two years now. They never bothered to clean it out since it was empty, and it smells. The floor boards have been taken up and there is no lighting, which makes it a terrible job if I have to go down to mend a fuse. I could break my neck down there".*

Spreadbury was offered £4,000 to move, but he said: "I'm 55, with no chance of a mortgage; I've lived here for 40 years. Of course I don't want to move". Tenants managed to get the property stamped for compulsory purchase order by Islington Borough Council, only to fear higher rents after conversion.

Power (1973) discusses a particularly severe form of winking, which also occurred in Stonefield Street (Plate 5.1). Two tenants at 16 Stonefield Street had a bulging wall, whilst they were out builders demolished the outer wall of their living room and bedroom providing a full view to the street. A steel support was erected from the middle of one bed to the ceiling, a note said: "You Dirty Filthy Bastard". That same evening the law centre worker who was chairman of the Tenants Association took out an injunction to prevent the landlords undertaking anymore building work. It took eight days before a screen was placed over the gap. Later Islington Borough Council compulsorily purchased the building, and 6 months later the wall was rebuilt. The wall became "a symbol in Stonefield Street of the tenants determination and the landlords not-so-kid-glove winking tactics..." (Power, 1973).

Stories like these were examples of "Rachmanism"<sup>26</sup> occurring in Barnsbury. One landlord David Knight was Barnsbury's Rachman. He owned a number of flats in Barnsbury (Sunday Times, 1970). David Knight was described by one judge as an appalling liar and unscrupulous landlord. Jennifer Kassman was a 23 year old teacher who was evicted from Barnsbury Road by Knight. Kassman reported Knight to the rent tribunal in an attempt to get her rent decreased. In response Knight cut off her electric, locked her out, threw out her belongings. She called the police and was allowed to get some of her belongings, some of these were missing. Kassman went to the council and Knight got a summons. Soon after she received a threatening letter in which Knight libelled he would shoot her dead. One week later, at night, a car pulled up and shone a lamp in her face. The next day she received another note saying "Cop it Kid, we shot at you and missed by half an inch. We will get you soon". The case went to court but was dismissed because of inconclusive evidence. In a later civil case she received damages of only £75, the judge said, "It is doubtful if there is any real civil remedy for the evicted tenant". Indeed from March 1972 to March 1973, London Borough of Islington's Protection Services received 573 complaints of harassment, 44 summonses and 2 convictions. Those successful convictions produced fines of £2 and £3, not much of a deterrent when profit potentials were over £10,000 (Power, 1973).

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<sup>26</sup> Rachmanism refers to the unscrupulous tactics of the landlord Peter Rachman who operated in London in the 1960s (see Green, 1979). His name is synonymous with winking at this time. The Rachman exposé came out of the Profumo sex scandal of 1963, and led to the Milner Holland Report of 1964.



Winkling at this time was not just associated with private landlords and property speculators, the Greater London Council undertook its own form of "welfare winkling". A number of houses were purchased by the Greater London Council on Cloudesley Street and Batchelor Street for £90 each between 1966-1970, these houses were then rehabilitated and let to higher income tenants for £15.00 a week:

*"Many of the original tenants were moved into appalling short life houses in North Islington and left to rot in the midst of slum clearance for over four years. The rehabilitated houses were...offered to the new tenants for £20,000 each" (Cowley et al., 1977:178-179).*

Labour's 1965 Rent Act made it a criminal offence for the eviction of tenants without a court order, tenant harassment was likewise outlawed, and a new system of fair rents replaced rent controls. Yet the taxation system on private rented dwellings remained the same, as such the private rent sector continued to decline (Green, 1979:226). Due to the 1965 Rent Act landlords in Barnsbury deliberately did not let out rooms because of their limited powers of eviction, therefore at this time there was an underuse of property in the area. With limited evictions the sale of property with vacant possession was to decline (Willcocks, 1967:82).

Gentrification and the operation of the value gap in Barnsbury was temporarily and spatially uneven (Table 5.7). As such gentrification in Barnsbury was more complex and chaotic than aggregate figures such as those in Table 5.6 reveal. For example, compare the tenorial transformation in Thornhill Square (Area 1) with that in Barnsbury Square (Area 3). In Thornhill Square, 12 per cent was owner occupied in 1961, 16 per cent in 1971, 33 per cent in 1981 and 46 per cent by 1991. As such

Thornhill Square did not really begin to gentrify until after 1971. Barnsbury Square on the other hand was gentrifying in the 1960s, and was 45 per cent owner occupied by 1971. A glance at the percentage change in socio-economic grouping 1961-1971, in the Thornhill and Barnsbury wards illustrates the same story. From 1961-1971 Barnsbury ward saw a 12.5 per cent increase in professional/managerial occupants, whilst Thornhill ward saw only a 4.5 per cent increase. Barnsbury Square then was to gentrify before Thornhill Square, this was in part due to the uneven closure of leaseholds (conversion back to freehold) in the area<sup>27</sup>. Different properties belonged to different landholding estates and their leases closed at different times.

Earliest records of the land in Barnsbury reveal it to have been owned by the Cathedral of St. Pauls. In the late C13th it was owned by Ralph de Berners it continued for some time in his family. In the 1500s the land passed through the hands of a variety of local families: the Fowlers, Fishers and Haltons, and in the mid-1700s the Tufnell family. After the Battle of Waterloo the land around London increased in value and the trustees of the then owner William Tufnell sold parcels of the land on lease to builders. As such the Barnsbury we see today was set out from the 1820s onwards<sup>28</sup>. The Stonefield or Cloudeley estate in the 1820s, the Milner-Gibson

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<sup>27</sup> In England the landholding system differs between freehold and leasehold property. In the case of a freehold property both the land and the building are owned outright by the purchaser. In the case of a leasehold property the resident is effectively a tenant in somebody else's property and on somebody else's land. S/he does not own the land or building but purchases the right to use them for a specified period. Leaseholds generally run for 99 years. At the end of the time the property reverts back to the freehold landlord.

<sup>28</sup> Barnsbury developed later than the adjacent Canonbury because the majority of the land was copyhold which meant that a fine had to be paid for tenure changes, also, "...enfranchisement required the tedious procedure of a private Act of Parliament - somewhat inhibiting would-be

estate in the 1830s and the Thornhill estate in the 1850s (Cosh, 1981:1-2). The leases from the older estates such as the Stonefield estate owned by aristocratic or institutional landlords folded between 1920 and 1940. These owners sold their freeholds to private landlords for several reasons; because ground rents which had been high in the C19th had been eroded by C20th inflation, because the landowners capital was tied up and yielding no return, because security of tenure had been extended to lessees, and because big freeholders were being condemned as slum landlords. It was the new freeholders, the private landlords, who were to profit from the flat break-up in central London after 1966, when private rented flats were sold into owner occupation and gentrification. Developers and private individuals waited in anticipation. The "London Property Letter" (February, 1970) circulated amongst estate agents referred to Barnsbury as a "healthy chicken ripe for the plucking" (Ferris, 1972:42; Barnsbury People Forum News, May, 1975).

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speculators. An Act of 1822 removed the disability on copyhold tenants, enabling the Lord of the Manor to grant licences to demise for 99 years at an agreed rate for the 'fine' (Cosh, 1981:4).

**Table 5.7 Tenurial Transformation at the micro area<sup>29</sup> level in Barnsbury 1961-1991**

| Tenure  | Year |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
|   | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 |
| <b>Area 1 Thornhill Square</b>                  |      |      |      |      |
| Owner Occupied                                  | 12.0 | 16.0 | 32.8 | 45.7 |
| Council   | 0.1  | 0.0  | 16.7 | 20.4 |
| Furnished Rent                                  | 25.0 | 33.0 | 21.7 | 15.2 |
| Unfurnished Rent                                | 59.0 | 48.0 | 16.9 | 7.5  |
| <b>Area 2 Barnsbury Park / Barnsbury Street</b> |      |      |      |      |
| Owner Occupied                                  | 7.0  | 33.0 | 28.6 | 22.8 |
| Council   | 0.1  | 11.0 | 54.7 | 22.3 |
| Furnished Rent                                  | 21.0 | 7.0  | 11.1 | 7.6  |
| Unfurnished Rent                                | 68.0 | 45.0 | 4.7  | 3.3  |
| <b>Area 3 Barnsbury Square</b>                  |      |      |      |      |
| Owner Occupied                                  | 15.0 | 45.0 | 41.2 | 52.1 |
| Council   | 0.2  | 15.0 | 23.5 | 25.2 |
| Furnished Rent                                  | 25.0 | 21.0 | 14.7 | 12.6 |
| Unfurnished Rent                                | 54.0 | 46.0 | 14.0 | 3.9  |
| <b>Area 4 Gibson Square / Almeida Street</b>    |      |      |      |      |
| Owner Occupied                                  | 17.0 | 28.5 | 45.0 | 51.5 |
| Council   | 0.2  | 1.0  | 12.1 | 12.7 |
| Furnished Rent                                  | 25.0 | 21.0 | 14.7 | 12.6 |
| Unfurnished Rent                                | 67.0 | 47.0 | 21.2 | 12.7 |
| <b>Area 5 Cloudesley Road</b>                   |      |      |      |      |
| Owner Occupied                                  | 7.0  | 12.0 | 43.2 | 45.3 |
| Council   | 4.0  | 12.0 | 24.9 | 25.2 |
| Furnished Rent                                  | 16.0 | 21.0 | 14.4 | 9.1  |
| Unfurnished Rent                                | 58.0 | 52.0 | 10.9 | 7.6  |

Source: U.K. Census.

Note: These sample areas are based on the closest approximation of enumeration districts 1961-1991. The census data is based on a 100% sample.

<sup>29</sup> By looking at enumeration district level census data for Barnsbury, I was able to gain a more sensitive profile of social and economic changes in the neighbourhood. But the enumeration district boundaries have changed throughout time, like the ward and borough boundaries, as such I have had to select five areas from Barnsbury which have more or less comparable E.D. boundaries throughout the selected years of this study (Figure 4.7).

However, the more recent Thornhill estate leases closed later than the others. The Thornhill estate included Hemingford Road, Matilda Street, Thornhill Square, Thornhill Crescent and Huntingdon Street. Thornhill's leases closed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when these properties were also sold to private landlords. As a result of the later lease reversions and therefore later purchase by private landlords, private rent also declined later in the Thornhill area than in the rest of Barnsbury. Indeed private rent was still increasing 1961-1971 in Thornhill, when elsewhere in Barnsbury it was rapidly decreasing (see Table 5.7). As a result gentrification came to the Thornhill area later than to the rest of Barnsbury, and the flat break-up market was less important. Indeed the Thornhill estate was one of the last great family owned estates in Islington to break up<sup>30</sup>. In 1971 Bartholomew in "Where to Live in London" said:

*"Areas with the best prospects now are the cheaper terraces of Barnsbury, like Hemingford Road, Thornhill Square and Thornhill Road, which missed out on the earlier price rises".*

Were similar processes evident in New York at this time? Hamnett and Randolph (1988:244-248) claimed that condominium<sup>31</sup> conversion in the United States was a

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<sup>30</sup> The Islington Gazette (4.10.68) speculated on the break-up of the Thornhill estate as a result of the leasehold reform law, which meant that there was to be no legal barrier to the compulsory sales of freeholds to qualified tenants who had lived in their house for at least five years. The building could be transferred to the tenant, the landlord could only ask for site value payments subject to the tenant occupying it for another 87 years. The leasehold reform act was difficult to interpret, but essentially the sitting tenant would be considered a competitor in the open market for the purposes of valuation, thus rising the price, s/he would have to pay for a freehold interest. Mrs. Winifred Simms (executive member of the Leasehold Association of Great Britain) said: "The spirit of the Act is that you are only buying the land; the house has already been paid for and should not enter into the valuation. But it has done in this case" (The Times, 14.1.69).

<sup>31</sup> The condominium is another form of ownership. United States Congress in 1961 passed section 234 of the National Housing Act which provided a legal model for condo ownership. The New York Condominium Act of 1964 backed this up in State law. When a building is converted into condo



function of the same value gap that caused the tenurial transformation from private rent to owner occupation in inner London. The background was the same: a distressed rental market, an increase in the demand for owner occupation and the favourable tax treatment of owner occupiers. Further, they argued that where condominium conversion occurred it was usually associated with a low level of abandonment. I would argue however that gentrification in Park Slope has been associated with a strong element of abandonment and tax arrears.

From looking at tax arrearage data the turning point from disinvestment to reinvestment in Park Slope becomes apparent. O'Hanlon (1982:200) provides data on the percentage of residential buildings five quarters in tax arrears<sup>32</sup> in Park Slope 1970-1980, the main decade of gentrification in the area. The year 1976 stands out as a turning point for it has the highest rate of arrears, 7.1 per cent. That condominium and cooperative<sup>33</sup> conversions began in 1977 (NYC DCP, 1985-25:12) cannot be

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ownership, the buyer buys the apartment itself, plus an undivided interest together with the other apartment owners in the common areas and facilities, for example, the land on which the building stands, the lobby, stairways, hallways, heating, electrical and mechanical systems, etc. There is no intermediary corporation and no proprietary lease for each apartment. The buyer owns the apartment and may obtain a mortgage to finance its purchase. All of the apartment owners are responsible for a proportionate share of the cost of fuel, the payroll for building employees, and other charges for operating the building. These costs are known as common charges. Unlike a coop shareholder, each condo owner directly pays a share of the real estate taxes on the entire building based on a proportionate interest in the common areas (The Brownstoner, 1981:12:4:12, van Weesep, 1987).

<sup>32</sup> Note that Smith et al. (1989) used tax arrears data on buildings 12+ quarters in arrears. O'Hanlon (1982) used tax arrears data on buildings 5+ quarters in arrears.

<sup>33</sup> A cooperative is a form of property ownership. When a building is converted into a coop, it means it is sold by the owner to an apartment corporation which is formed to take over ownership of it. The entire building, or group of buildings, is then owned or leased under a long term lease by the cooperative corporation. In a coop people do not actually buy their individual apartment, rather, they buy a number of shares in the corporation allocated to that particular apartment. Important factors in determining how many shares each apartment has include number of rooms, location and size of each unit. The number of shares allocated to each apartment must be fair and reasonable. Ownership



considered a coincidence. There was no real interest in coops and condos in Park Slope until after 1977.

The demand for coops was created by people who could not afford \$200,000 brownstones. Coops became very visible in north and central Park Slope in the early 1980s (Griffin, 1982:26). Developers offered perks or buy downs to those purchasing coops. The three census tracts which border Grand Army Plaza, Prospect Park West, 1st Street and 6th Avenue had 72 per cent of Park Slope's conversion filings from the late 1970s to mid-1980s. There are very few condos in Park Slope because coops are more economically advantageous to the sponsor. The types of coops that most people looked for at the peak of the coop market were the brownstone type coop, a smaller unit coop in old walk-up apartment buildings and coops in elevator type buildings which are luxury, having a doorman and a professional building manager (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

Between 1977-1984 applications were filed for 130 conversions, this made up 21 per cent of the applications in the borough of Brooklyn as a whole. There are examples of condo conversion without the previous abandonment of the building, but in Park Slope and in New York in general (see Smith et al., 1989) abandonment, tax arrears, the rent gap and condo conversion are more closely related than Hamnett and Randolph suggest. Hamnett and Randolph (1988:251) further claim that

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of the shares entitles the purchaser to a long term proprietary lease for the apartment (The Brownstoner, 1981:12:4:12).

condominium conversion as an example of the value gap at work was mobilized quickly in the United States due to an absence of tenant protection legislation. But I argue New York did not have an absence of tenant protection legislation. A study by the City of New York in 1964 (see Milner Holland Report, 1965:219-222) found that 77 per cent of the City's two million rented units were rent controlled, another 5 per cent belonged to the public authority. Moreover security of tenure was protected by law, unlike in England. Therefore with landlords and tenants getting a supposedly better deal in New York, landlords were not as ready to sell up as in London, and private renting in New York in particular and the United States in general did not decline to the extent it did in London and England.

A glance at coop conversion, rather than condo conversion, does though reveal that, as in Barnsbury winkling was also operative in Park Slope. For example, in 1981 the tenants of a Garfield Place apartment block due to be renovated into 6 room apartments to be priced at \$90,000 each, formed an association to oppose the conversion of their homes and promised not to buy any of the coops. They charged the landlord with harassment. Housing activists said that the landlord was trying to force the tenants out so that he could sell at a profit and saddle the coop owners with the cost of repairs to the building. Dianne Kirkpatrick a tenant on the first floor said that Mosconi (the landlord) had cut off their heat and hot water for ten days in mid-October when a new boiler was being installed. He sealed off the basement, denying them access to fuse boxes and the backyard. One tenant said: "This is not a case of rent control strangling the profits", for profits were made in 1979 and 1980: "There is

a large displacement going on in Park Slope and people don't have any place to turn", said another tenant. Two Park Slope landlords (one being Mosconi) were later forbidden to coop by the New York State Supreme Court of Justice. The judge said that the landlords were involved in,

*"a scandalous scheme and pattern designed to circumvent the standards of decency and fair dealings with tenants"* (Goodno, 1982a).

The year 1976 was a turning point in Park Slope in terms of tax arrearage, but 1976 was also the year in which New York became a global city, here we can see the different levels of uneven development operating in tandem. A consideration of vacant buildings also reveals that 1976 was the peak year during the early phase of gentrification, when 156 residential buildings in Park Slope were vacant. The number of vacant buildings increased in the years 1969 to 1976 and 1979 to 1983, and the number has decreased continuously since 1983 (see Table 5.8). During 1969-1982 a total of 480 buildings were vacated, by 1982 138 of these had been reoccupied (Source: Sanborn Vacant Buildings File).

The distribution of vacant buildings in Park Slope has changed over time. In the late 1970s when O'Hanlon undertook his field observations there were two concentrations of vacant and/or abandoned buildings (Figure 5.1); to the north-west bounded especially by 6th Avenue and Carroll Street, and in the middle south Slope. In 1991 when I undertook my field observations (Figure 5.2) the main concentration was in

**Table 5.8 Number of Vacant Buildings Park Slope 1969-1990**

| Year | Buildings  |            |              | Total Residential |
|------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
|      | One Family | Two Family | Multi Family |                   |
| 1969 | 2          | 8          | 12           | 22                |
| 1970 | 3          | 8          | 19           | 30                |
| 1971 | 11         | 19         | 39           | 69                |
| 1972 | 6          | 20         | 58           | 84                |
| 1973 | 4          | 20         | 58           | 92                |
| 1974 | 4          | 24         | 58           | 86                |
| 1975 | 5          | 26         | 67           | 98                |
| 1976 | 7          | 29         | 120          | 156               |
| 1977 | 6          | 28         | 101          | 135               |
| 1978 | 5          | 35         | 112          | 152               |
| 1979 | 4          | 40         | 127          | 171               |
| 1980 | 5          | 43         | 146          | 194               |
| 1981 | 5          | 45         | 161          | 211               |
| 1982 | 4          | 50         | 157          | 211               |
| 1983 | 4          | 50         | 162          | 216               |
| 1984 | 4          | 48         | 147          | 199               |
| 1985 | 5          | 39         | 125          | 169               |
| 1986 | 5          | 38         | 107          | 150               |
| 1987 | 5          | 38         | 96           | 139               |
| 1988 | 6          | 45         | 88           | 139               |
| 1989 | 6          | 43         | 85           | 134               |
| 1990 | 7          | 46         | 84           | 137               |

Source: Sanborn Vacant Buildings File.

the area bounded by Baltic Street and 5th Avenue, and occasional vacant and/or abandoned buildings were dotted around 4th Avenue (Plate 5.2). The Baltic Street area in census tract 129.01 is an area of persistent housing deterioration, it lost 24 per cent of its units between 1970-1980. In the years 1970-1980 census tracts 129.01 and 131 together had 44 per cent of Park Slope's vacant buildings. The Baltic Street urban renewal area is located here.

Figure 5.1 Map of Vacant Property in Park Slope in 1980 by O'Hanlon, 1982





Figure 5.2 Map of Vacant Property in Park Slope in 1992





**Table 5.9 Park Slope Buildings Vacant and Under Rehabilitation by Census Tract in 1989**

| Census Tract | Number of Buildings |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 129.01       | 22                  |
| 129.02       | 20                  |
| 131          | 28                  |
| 133          | 13                  |
| 135          | 5                   |
| 137          | 9                   |
| 139          | 20                  |
| 151          | 13                  |
| 153          | -                   |
| 155          | 3                   |
| 157          | -                   |
| 159          | 3                   |
| 161          | 8                   |
| 163          | 9                   |
| 165          | 3                   |
| 167          | 8                   |

Source: Sanborn Vacant Buildings File.

Note: \* Buildings include residential, commercial and public or institutional.

In the main decade of gentrification in Park Slope, 1970-1980, the number of housing units declined by 5 per cent, approximately 1,200 units. The most recent City Planning survey (1989) of buildings vacant or under rehabilitation in Park Slope (Table 5.9), shows census tracts 129.01, 129.02 and 131 to the north-west had high concentrations of vacant buildings and buildings being rehabilitated. The other concentration was in the south Slope, tracts 139 and 151. The realtors which I interviewed in Spring 1992 claimed that any further gentrification in Park Slope was

occurring in these areas, thus backing up Smith's rent gap thesis (see section 5.4 on real estate).

The reasons behind the processes of disinvestment in Park Slope were varied. Bradford and Rubinowitz (1975:82) blame the Federal Housing Administration, and the bankers and realtors who participate in federal programmes for contributing to abandonment in United States cities. They specifically blame the influx of federally insured FHA loans in inner-city areas and the departure of conventional loans (red-lining) which have enabled the decline of many urban neighbourhoods. The FHA began to insure mortgages in older urban areas in the late 1960s. Bradford and Rubinowitz (page 84) criticize the maladministration and fraud in these programmes, which has resulted in foreclosures and abandonment. Abandonment in the United States seems then to be directly related to federal programmes, and the associated rapid suburban expansion, white flight, black inner-city ghettoization, overall decline in demand for inner-city housing, decentralization of employment activity, fiscal stress, specific landlord disinvestment strategies, and individual cases of perception and behaviour which implicate abandonment (Sternlieb et al., 1974; Bradford and Rubinowitz, 1975; Dear, 1976). Kristoff (1970) estimated that about 100,000 units were removed from the New York City housing market between 1965-1968. He suggests that the rent control features specific to New York City contributed heavily to this abandonment (see also Sternlieb and Burchell, 1973).

Earlier in this section in response to Hamnett and Randolph (1988), I argued that there was not an absence of tenant protection legislation in New York at this time. A report by Ira Lowry (1971) (see Dear, 1976:85) which shows the influence of rent control on abandonment in New York City provides more evidence. The relationship between rent control and abandonment is as follows. In the rent control sector, the owner of a building had to counter an annual 6 per cent cost increase with only a 2 per cent rental increase, therefore disinvestment and abandonment occurred in the rent control sector. On the other hand in the uncontrolled sector, 1968-69 rents were increasing at around 25 per cent on a two year lease. In Park Slope, in 1982 alone, the city closed 100 buildings which had been abandoned by landlords or were occupied by a owner who could not meet tax payments. Many were occupied by tenants, some were empty (Goodno, 1982a:7).

Tenurial transformation in Park Slope was slow and less impressive than in Barnsbury. The number of owner occupied units in Park Slope increased nearly two-fold between 1960-1990: in 1960 16.1 per cent of housing units were owner occupied and 80.8 per cent rented, in 1970 15.5 per cent were owned and 80.5 per cent rented, in 1980 17.4 per cent were owned and 74.5 per cent were rented, and in 1990 29 per cent of housing units were owner occupied and 63 per cent rented (U.S. Census). Moreover, in Park Slope, gentrification has not been affected by a leasehold system. In the United States property owners have a more direct control over their land and property because they own their land and property outright. American freehold land tenure enables the liberalism and possessive individualism associated with

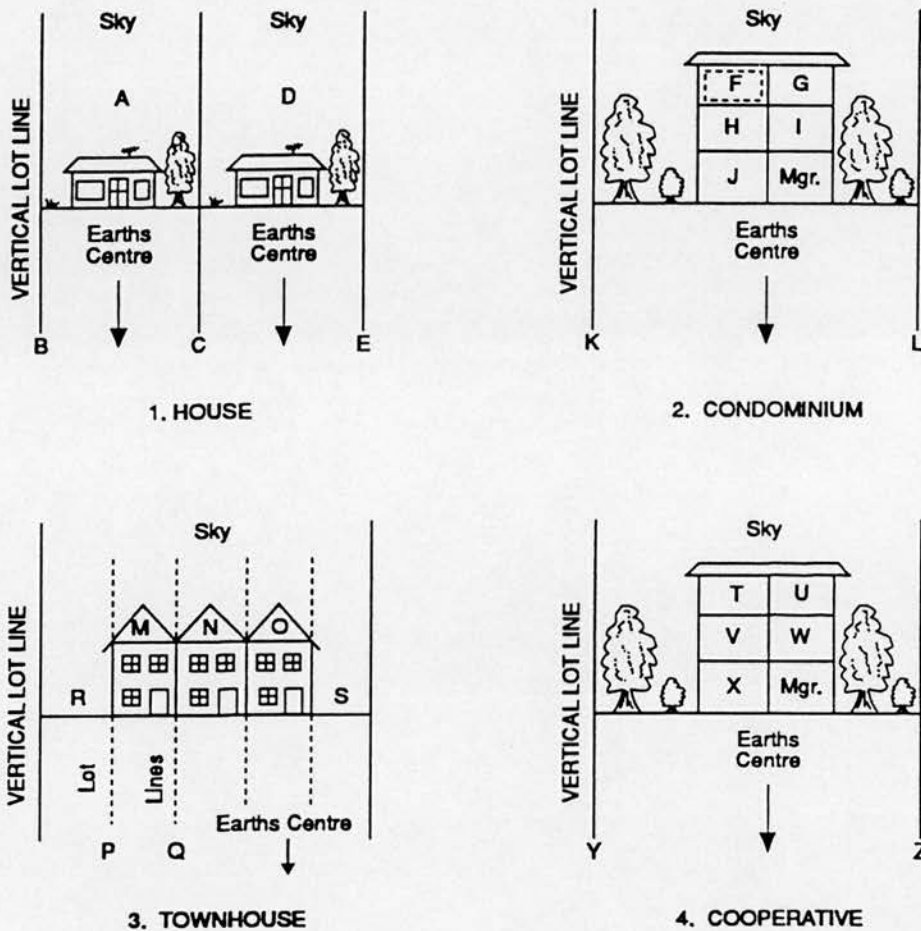
gentrification in the United States. Indeed gentrification in Park Slope has further increased individuals control over their land and property through the tenurial transformation (through renovation and rehabilitation) from private rent, warehouses or factories to condos and coops (see footnotes 12 and 14). Condos and coops are a democratic form of property ownership, for under United States property law coops and condos are designed to combine communal living with communal ownership (Figure 5.3):

*"A coop - you don't own real estate, you own shares in the corporation that owns the building. The building still has an underlying mortgage that's being paid for with the maintenance. In a condo you buy it free and clear, there's no underlying mortgage. So the developer has had to pay off his loans and take his money, he's not leaving most of his mortgage with these people" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

To summarize, the concept of real estate in the United States is directly related to land rather than property: "Real estate is land and the improvements made to land, and the rights to use them" (New York State Realtors, Inc., 1981). In England property owners may not own the land on which their property is situated due to an undemocratic landholding system (see Massey and Catalano, 1978:54-68), as such the dwelling itself is more important - the Englishman's home is his castle scenario. Or as Hamnett and Randolph (1988:254) suggest: "An Englishman's home, if held on a leasehold, is his landlord's castle" (citing Julia Eaton, 1983). It is this difference which makes the value gap a more appropriate theorization of gentrification in London than in the New York, because the value gap is more concerned with property values;

*"the disparity between the value of a BUILDING in a vacant state and its value with a sitting tenant, whose contractual rights are likely to have a negative impact.*

**Figure 5.3 Communal Living: Condominiums and Cooperatives and their Legal Definition**



**Notes:**

**2. Condominium:** The owner of F owns the space inside the dotted lines. Except for F,G,H,I, and J's air spaces, they all own an undivided interest in everything between lot lines K and L, this includes the land, the shell of the building, the elevators, the lobby, etc.

**3. Townhouse:** In Park Slope the brownstones are predominantly townhouses. The owner of house M owns the land between lot lines P and Q from the centre of the earth skyward.

**4. Cooperative:** All the land and building between lot lines Y and Z are owned by a corporation that is owned by the shareholders T, U, V, W and X.

(Source: New York Real Estate, 1981:450).

*The value gap is subject to government regulation of tenant rights" (Musterd and van Weesep, 1991:12),*

and the rent gap with land values;

*"for devalorization leads to physical decline, which in turn lowers the market price of the LAND on which the dilapidated buildings stand" (Smith, 1982:149).*

This section on uneven development has shown that the processes associated with gentrification in London and New York have both differences and similarities, and that the different scales of uneven development are mutually constitutive. In London, suburbanization, government housing policy, building society policy, the global city, the decline of C20th landlordism and tenurial transformation have been relevant. In New York, suburbanization, white flight, government housing policy, local fiscal stress, the global city, and abandonment have been relevant. Differences in property law and ideology, such as the English leasehold system and attitudes towards owner occupation account for many of the differences in gentrification between Barnsbury and Park Slope.

In Barnsbury government housing policy in the 1950s and 1960s was a potent force in the gentrification process, as such the neighbourhood was approximately sixty per cent gentrified by the 1970s. In contrast in Park Slope the area was still quite seedy in the early 1980s, rapid tenurial transformation was not part of the gentrification process in this area.



### 5.3 The Production of Gentrified Property

Now I want to turn to the types or methods of gentrification undertaken in both Barnsbury and Park Slope, to see how different processes of revalorization were in both neighbourhoods.

In Britain the government looked to local authorities to be instrumental in improving old houses (HMSO, 1968:2):

*"The success of area improvement will depend on local authorities securing the cooperation of householders in improving their houses with grants. In the government's view the voluntary principle must be the guiding one, although powers of compulsory purchase would be available. It is essential that the wishes and needs of people in the area should be fully considered, and that the authorities plans for the area should be fully explained"* (HMSO, 1968:3).

But in Barnsbury home improvement was more often undertaken by private companies, groups or individuals. In the early days of gentrification the main property companies in Islington sold "shells" direct to developers, who then contracted construction companies. Shells which had not been sold or converted directly could be placed in an auction. Property companies held auctions about two or three times a year, at which individual buyers (gentrifiers) could bid for the shell but invariably the developer had the resources to outbid them. On the other hand, owner occupiers would employ either a local builder or do the work themselves. This has changed little (see Plate 5.3) as my interviews with real estate agents reveal:

*"People tend to employ builders to do the hard work for them and then do the finishing touches themselves. I do get asked sometimes for recommendations for builders, but I hardly ever get asked for recommendations for interior designers or decorators"* (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

An ironic example of the production of gentrified property in Barnsbury can be illustrated by the case where the Greater London Council itself acted as a gentrifier. Cloudesley Place and Batchelor Street were converted by the Greater London Council, and tenants were moved to the Elthorne Road Redevelopment Area. The Greater London Council charged rents of £10 a week, but because so few locals could afford these rents the vacancies were advertized in the Sunday Times for "high income" tenants (Hall, 1972; Power, 1972:4). The Greater London Council was charging rents similar to those by private landlords after rehabilitation.

In another example of gentrification in Barnsbury, the Greater London Council withdrew its support, when as in the previous case, high rents were charged post-rehabilitation. A pro-conservation group, The Barnsbury Association, was to rehabilitate housing and to rent it out at a low cost. They took over some houses from the Greater London Council in Barnsbury Street and converted them into flats. As the flats were to be let to those locals in housing need, the rehabilitation attracted the relevant local authority subsidies. But the cost of the rehabilitation was expensive and therefore the Barnsbury Association had to charge rents of over £12 a week. At this cost few locals were able to move in. The Greater London Council withdrew its support when it realized the implications of the project. Many of the locals said that it had been the aim of the project to attract the middle classes all along.

More recently in Barnsbury and in Islington a different form of gentrification has become apparent. Murie (1991) argues that people are buying one-time council

housing in a process of gentrification. The purchase of council housing was made legal in England in 1980 under the Conservative government's "Right to Buy Scheme". An estate agent said that one of the attractions of buying an ex-council property in Islington is that this property starts with a 125 year lease, assuming that it is a freehold property (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992). In Islington 1986-1987 there were 189 sales of council property (London Research Centre, 1988), in 1988-1989 this increased substantially to 745 sales (Annual Abstract of Greater London Statistics, 1989/90:Table 113). Another estate agent said that a lot of the council property in Barnsbury is period property, for example on Therberton Street, and as such it sells well. Yet there have not really been enough resales to make this a significant process (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

In Park Slope during the early phases many gentrifiers undertook their own work, this became known as sweat equity. Sweat equity is a 1 per cent loan provided to finance 100 per cent of the rehabilitation costs of a property, where the prospective owners do much of the finishing work themselves. Homesteading and the commercial version shopsteading are variants on sweat equity. Shopsteading refers to commercial and mixed use buildings sold by the city to applicants willing to rehabilitate them and to become owner operators. To assist with the financing of the commercial side of the property a special loan fund was set aside by the Economic Capital Corporation. New York City has especially pushed shopsteading in Park Slope on 5th Avenue in masonry structures which have been acquired by the City for the non-payment of taxes. In 1967 the Daily News had called 5th Avenue a slum, in 1981 the vacancy rate

was 40 per cent, many of the abandoned buildings had fallen to the city through the non-payment of their taxes. The 5th Avenue shopsteading programme started in 1981 as a way of helping the Avenue by selling vacant city-owned buildings to small businesses. But by 1985 only 2 buildings had been successfully renovated; shopsteading was viewed as a scourge instead. As such 5th Avenue remains the main shopping street for the hispanic community (Plate 5.4). Shopsteading seems to have failed in Park Slope because it takes a lot of time, for the city has to vet applications including architectural plans and the experience and background of applicants.

The unmediated gentrification type became more popular in Park Slope in the later stages of gentrification as increasingly affluent people moved in, and by this time brownstoning<sup>34</sup> had enabled the emergence of a variety of renovation businesses who specialized in brownstones and rowhouses which could be contracted for the needs of unmediated gentrification.

Mediated gentrification in Park Slope, where the developer is the producer of the building was more noticable in the mid to late 1980s, when cooperative and condominium conversions began to dominate. In Park Slope the gentrification type "Ready Maders" was created (Draper, 1991:177-178), akin to Smith's mediated gentrification type. With the latter the purchaser buys the ready made image. The purchaser does not act as a producer or creator, although s/he can add their own social or other values later. This was aided in 1966 by a group called "The Park Slope

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<sup>34</sup> Brownstoning refers to the renovation or rehabilitation of brownstones.

Betterment Committee" who were associated with "The Park Slope Civic Council". The Committee bought houses and would advertize them through brokers to "white collar workers", their aim was to "stabilize" the area. This was heralded as "private initiative" (see Civic News, 1969:9).

In Park Slope a rather unusual mediation into the gentrification process occurred. It was a quite different kind of initiative formulated by public utility companies in the area. Corporate initiative in Park Slope was part of the green-lining movement designed to persuade banks to cooperate in the restoration of Brooklyn's neighbourhoods. In 1966 Brooklyn Union Gas restored a four-storey brownstone in Park Slope which was too large to be revitalized by the public. At this time there was no government aid for revitalization, therefore people in Park Slope approached Brooklyn Union Gas for help. The Brooklyn Union Gas Company "saved" for example, Prospect Place between 6th Avenue and Flatbush Avenue by adapting three old abandoned stores into one-storey residences and renovating the exteriors of other buildings on the block including the "trompe l'oeil" paintings on the sides of three of the buildings (Muir, 1977:33). The scheme was financed by Greater New York Savings Bank and the Federal Housing Association. This and other projects were referred to as the "Cinderella"<sup>35</sup> schemes:

*"What was sound and sturdy was restored! What was ugly was made beautiful - just like Cinderella!"* (Civic News, 1972:10-13).

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<sup>35</sup> The Cinderella Schemes by Brooklyn Union Gas are a metaphor for the Park Slope which had been neglected and unrecognized or disregarded, in terms of its beauty and other merits.

The first occurred in 1965, the Cinderella schemes attempted to bring change by stimulating the private sector to invest in the revitalization of threatened neighbourhoods. Since the scheme's emergence in Park Slope work has also been carried out in Queens and Staten Island. Other Cinderella projects followed, these were helped by contractors, developers and banks. By 1985 over 100 schemes had been completed, including shops, apartments, coops and parks (Draper, 1991:362-36).

Brooklyn Union Gas also opened the Brownstone Information Centre which gives the public information on the basics of renovation and rehabilitation. The company prepared short films on Brownstone Revival which were shown in movie theatres. A variety of brownstone fairs have been held, for example, the "Brooklyn Brownstone Fair" held on October 5th 1974 in the showroom floor of Brooklyn Union Gas in Montague Street, downtown Brooklyn. It included exhibits, information booths, craftsmen, contractors, utilities, decorators, and bus tours (Ortner, 1974:37:9:6). Brooklyn Union Gas has also sponsored workshops in conjunction with Park Slope Civic Council's annual house tours. These investigated the financial and technical aspects of buying property in Brooklyn:

*"The Brownstone revival would not have taken place if it weren't for the basic fact that brownstone ownership in Brooklyn makes economic sense. A spacious brownstone is a good investment"* (Brooklyn Union Gas, 1985, cited by Draper, 1991:364).

In the early 1970s William E. Hand of Brooklyn Union Gas said:



*"One of the vital signs of a healthy New York City is the incredible rebirth of decrepit blocks into attractive middle income neighborhoods" (Civic News, 1973:36:6:4).*

Revitalization was undertaken in decaying areas where gas usage was in decline.

Revitalization helped to stabilize the area increasing Brooklyn Union Gas' customer clientele and helping profit margins. Note the references to "gas" in this comment on Brooklyn Union Gas' aforementioned restorations in Prospect Place:

*"The gas-lit outside eye-appeal of the new homes is complemented by the comfort features inside: year round gas air conditioning and plenty of living space that spills over into free-form backyard patios dotted with evergreen shrubbery and gas-fired barbeques" (Civic News, 1972:12).*

Another utility company, Con Edison, offered similar help in the form of its "Renaissance"<sup>36</sup> housing rehabilitation programmes (Plate 5.5). One such example is the former Higgins Ink building on 8th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues which was converted into ten middle-income coop apartments. Paul Kerzer an early coordinator of Con Edison's Renaissance programme said:

*"We believe Brooklyn has embarked on a major renaissance of neighborhood stability and of rebuilding our major preservation efforts. The cooperation demonstrated by projects such as this demonstrates our major goal" (The Brownstoner, 1981:12:4:9).*

The Renaissance programme was/is designed to make more coop apartments available and it offers legal, architectural and financial services to the community. The activities of Brooklyn Union Gas and Con Edison reveal that the,

*"most effective organizations are at the grass roots level: the restoration corporations and development corporations, and the large utility companies determined to restore a failing clientele" (Cantwell, 1980a).*

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<sup>36</sup> The Renaissance Schemes by Con Edison are a metaphor for the revival of historic Park Slope.

The production of gentrified property in Barnsbury was dominated by individuals, developers, housing associations and local government. In Park Slope it was dominated by individuals, developers, community groups and public utility companies. In Chapter 6 I go on to illustrate how the revalorization of Barnsbury and Park Slope was politicized, and how this aided the production of gentrified property.

#### **5.4 Real Estate Market and Trends**

In this section I illustrate the activities of the real estate industry associated with the gentrification process, in terms of its market and trends in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

The real estate industry in London has an important background history. Up until the late 1950s estate agencies mainly dealt in property management; in rentals, sales, property valuation and property surveys. From the late 1950s onwards the sale of property became the main money maker and it was less time consuming than property management. The new estate agents were salesmen and businessmen. In the 1980s local real estate agencies were invaded by larger financial institutions who practised strategies of vertical and horizontal integration in a process of capital concentration. Over 53 per cent of employment growth in real estate occurred in London and the south-east (Beaverstock, Leyshon, Rutherford, Thrift and Williams, 1992). In the 1980s property sales became computerized by a chain of agents operating in north London. A vendor's property is multi-listed through a central computer so that they can apply buyer's requirements to specific properties. According to David Nicholls of Drivers and Norris, "It enables us to market our clients properties on a much wider

scale than we could hope to manage from our own office alone" (Islington Gazette, 3.10.86). Yet, although most real estate agencies operating in Barnsbury have national networks they are local in outlook. When asked about their agencies' operations, one estate agent answered:

*"National - we've got now about 480 offices throughout the country. Any property can be offered at any of the offices at our disposal, but obviously its only worth pushing the details out through the surrounding area"* (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

Pre-1950 property transactions in Islington and Barnsbury were primarily rented accommodation from one private landlord to another, rented accommodation at this time was still seen as profitable. The sale of owner occupied property was small, the result of red-lining, poor property and limited demand. This was all to change quite rapidly in the late 1950s, as seen in the section on the value gap, because rent decontrol legislature in the Housing Acts moved the controlled tenants and unlocked a previously closed housing market. Real estate agencies had an active role in the gentrification process. One estate agency controlled a building society, a property company and a mortgage company, suggesting that some agents were able to control and manipulate the market, they could "create an up and coming street or terrace" (Pitt, 1977:10). Advertizements in local newspapers at this time reveal how much real estate people wanted property in Barnsbury: "A Better Cash Offer on any Property" - Atlas Estate Agents, Caledonian Road (Islington Gazette, 17.7.64). Williams (1976:74) found that up to 90 per cent of those properties sold by estate agencies in

Islington in the 1960s were of rented property into owner occupation. A property letter circulated privately to businessmen in 1970 stated:

*"Lonsdale Square sets the hottest standards for others to follow. It is undoubtedly one of the most attractive in the whole of London. But you'd need a rich man's money to get in there now. Latest prices we've heard of are £15,000 for an unsweetened 11-room terraced property and £20,000 for its adjacent sister that has had the full improvement treatment. That is about £5,000 up on 1968 levels and a cool £7,000 up on 1966 margins. For a cheaper alternative, look at the eastern end of Richmond Avenue. The property is not in the same class as that in Lonsdale Square. But at least one side backs onto the square. You would expect to pay £10,000 for three stories plus basement. For that you'd get roughly eight rooms, still in unsweetened condition" (Ash, 1972b:32).*

By 1972 nearly 60 per cent of Barnsbury's residential property had been rehabilitated, the new households consisted of middle class owner occupiers or those paying high rents in Greater London Council and Barnsbury Housing Association conversions (Ferris, 1972:95; Counter Information Services, 1973:63). Ash (1972b:94) describes Barnsbury at this time:

*"...Gibson Square and on through Milner Square: the one in process of restoration to middle class occupation, the other architecturally sinister and a slum (a perhaps rare case of architectural determinism?). Turn left along Barnsbury Street and left again down the depressed Liverpool Road as far as Batchelor Street on the right, thereby entering the complicated Barnsbury Traffic Scheme. Turning back north up Cloudesley Road, note the rehabilitation in progress and the newly-laid cobbles in the street. Find your way north through the maze as best you can, perhaps especially noting the middle class victory in Lonsdale Square".*

In the late 1970s property speculation in Barnsbury went into demise and council ownership began to increase. Pitt (1977:10-11) provides three reasons: 1. property values stopped increasing, making it impossible for property companies to remain liquid by remortgaging their existing property; 2. interest rates fell, increasing the

monthly loss on tenanted property; 3. a mortgage famine depressed the market for empty houses; 4. tenants were getting more militant; 5. local authorities were being pressured by tenants and central government to municipalize and rehabilitate old property. From this time the real estate market became increasingly municipalized in Islington:

*"The big race was on. As the traditional private sector collapsed, who would get the houses? Would there be wave after wave of middle class 'immigrants' to back up the early settlers? Or, would the Council, politically sensitive to its working class power base, beat them to it?" (Pitt, 1977:11).*

In Islington in the 1980s larger conversions were replaced by smaller scale conversions, i.e. the conversion of a single family town house or rented flats into a number of small one or two bedroomed owner occupied flats. From 1982-1986 large scale conversions (3+ bedrooms) declined from nearly 200 properties a year to just over 50 properties; the conversion of medium sized property (2 bedrooms) peaked in 1984 at over 250 properties and then waivered around 200 properties for the next two years; the conversion of 1 bedroomed properties increased two-fold between 1982-1983 and continued to remain the highest number of conversions, approximately 300 in 1986 (Islington Borough Council, figures on planning permission granted, Beeby, 1988:44-46).

Now I want to look at the pattern of real estate prices and turnover in Barnsbury. Power (1972:3) notes the profits which were realized from a house in Lonsdale Square which cost £9,000 in 1966, £18,000 in 1969 and £35,000 in 1972. Table 5.10 shows that the sales prices of property in Barnsbury have been consistently higher

than those in Islington and Greater London since the early 1960s. The rapid price escalations in 1971-1972 can be associated with the pre-1973 property boom in the United Kingdom. The peak of the real estate market in Barnsbury and Islington was 1987, after the 1987 Stock Market Crash the real estate market slowed down. There were a variety of reasons. Real estate agents noted that Docklands had an affect on Barnsbury:

*"I think that the main change for Islington as a whole was when Docklands started up, we probably lost a little bit of business to Docklands because Docklands was pricing itself at the top end of the market, and Barnsbury for Islington is the top end of the market. I'm sure Barnsbury suffered. But really Docklands has gone flat now, you know it doesn't affect us at all, in fact there may even be a shift back from Docklands to Islington. They're both well placed for the City so we weren't really after the same sort of people"* (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

Another reason behind the slow down in the property market was the then Chancellor Nigel Lawson's budget, which increased interest rates to control inflation, thus forcing mortgage rates up, alongside the announcement that multiple mortgage tax relief was to be abolished. Indeed estate agents during my interviews dated the downturn in Barnsbury exactly, to July 31st 1987, when the dual miras<sup>37</sup> was stopped. Before this date two people buying were allowed two lots of tax relief on their property, after the date only one lot of tax relief was allowed. Hidden within the aggregate statistics of Table 5.10, from the peak of the market in Barnsbury in 1987 prices have declined by 30-35 per cent. In 1987 a 2 bed period flat would have cost £120,000, by 1992 this had dropped to £90,000. With a 4/5 bed house the differential was similar, but not as steep because this type of property was more sought after and

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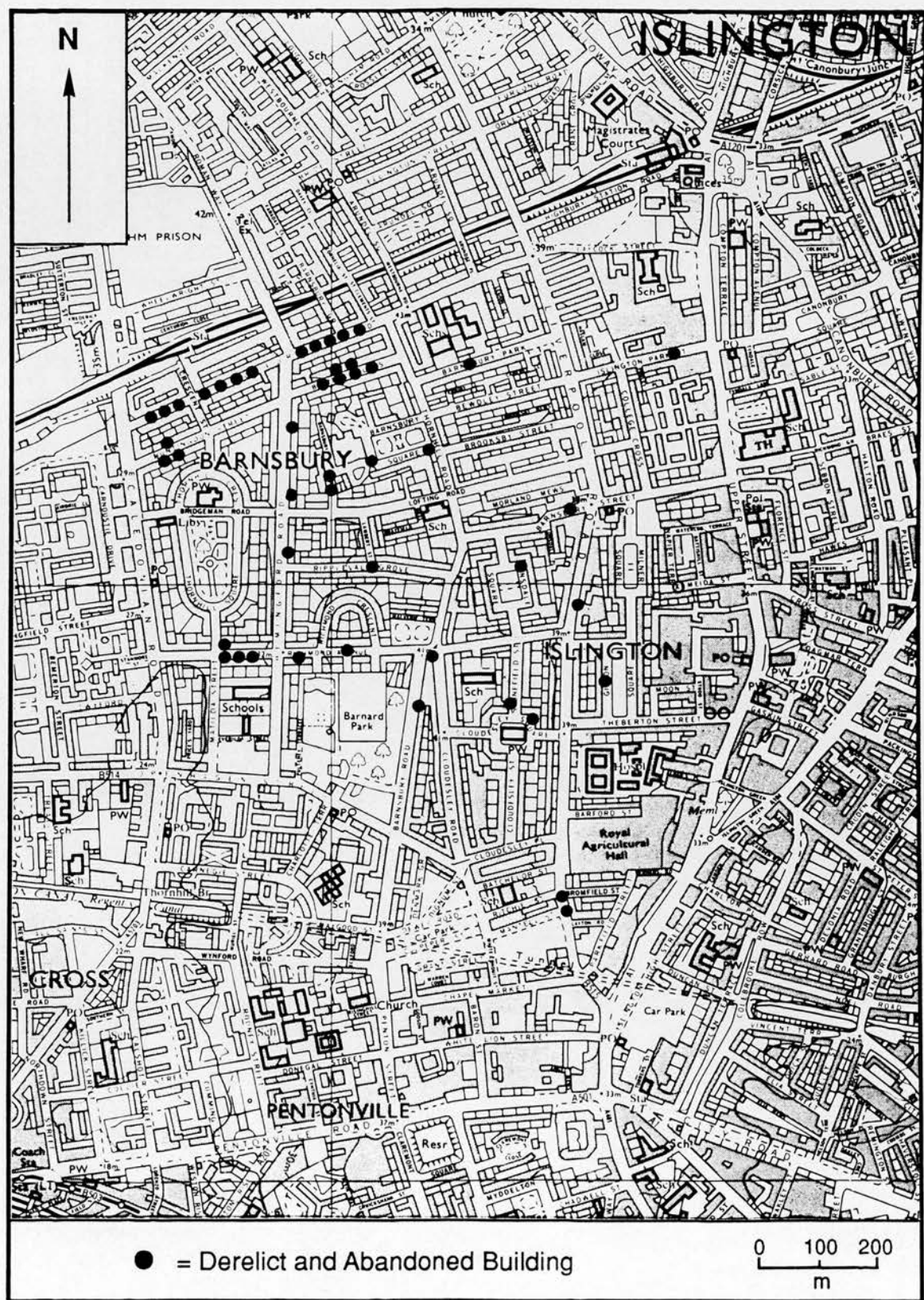
<sup>37</sup> Miras translates as mortgage interest relief at the source.



did not appear on the market as frequently (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992). There was a deadline for the termination of dual miras, as such estate agents were beset with buyers, and the price of every two bedroomed flat in London increased (Seagrave, 1989:20). After this blip in sales, the real estate market went stagnant and sellers stayed put unless they really had to sell, waiting to get the price they thought their property was worth. Many owner occupiers who could not sell at the price they wanted moved house and then let their previous home, increasing private rent in Barnsbury in the late 1980s. Two sets of legislation helped this process; the 1989 Housing Act which abolished rent restrictions, and Fair Rent Tenancies which reduced security of tenure with the aim of liberating more homes for rent. The latter made it easier for landlords (in Barnsbury, owner occupiers who could not sell their homes) to let their property without fearing they may not get it back, and it increased rents so that owner occupiers could let out parts of their homes.

Irrespective of the decline of the real estate market in Barnsbury in the late 1980s, Barnsbury was one of the best buys in Islington in 1988 along with De Beauvoir Town (Vercoe, 1989). And by 1989 Islington was the seventh most expensive borough (by house price) in London (Table 5.11). In the late 1980s the areas in Barnsbury which still had the potential to be gentrified were Caledonian Road, described as "cheerfully and irredeemably scruffy", and Offord Road described as "large dishevelled Georgian houses ripe for renovation" (Seagrave, 1989:386-387).

Figure 5.4 Derelict and Abandoned Property in Barnsbury, 1992



**Table 5.10 A Comparison of Average Sales Prices in Barnsbury, Islington and Greater London for Selected Years - 1955-1992**

| Year | £ - Price               |                         |                              |              |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
|      | Barnsbury<br>All Houses | Islington<br>All Houses | Greater London<br>All Houses | Older Houses |
| 1955 | 1,200                   | -                       | -                            | -            |
| 1957 | 1,800                   | -                       | -                            | -            |
| 1959 | 2,380                   | 2,750                   | -                            | -            |
| 1961 | 3,457                   | -                       | -                            | -            |
| 1963 | 4,450                   | 4,000                   | -                            | -            |
| 1965 | 5,750                   | -                       | -                            | -            |
| 1966 | 7,000                   | 5,000                   | -                            | -            |
| 1967 | 8,380                   | 4,196                   | -                            | -            |
| 1969 | 10,975                  | 7,154                   | -                            | -            |
| 1971 | 14,545                  | 10,241                  | -                            | -            |
| 1972 | 22,500                  | 17,392                  | -                            | -            |
| 1973 | 26,500                  | 20,765                  | 12,310                       | 11,870       |
| 1975 | 27,500                  | 24,678                  | 13,327                       | 12,912       |
| 1977 | 30,000                  | 27,900                  | 15,212                       | 14,632       |
| 1979 | 35,000                  | 31,200                  | 25,540                       | 24,920       |
| 1981 | 45,000                  | 44,800                  | 29,687                       | 29,275       |
| 1983 | 54,583                  | 49,000                  | 35,417                       | 34,904       |
| 1985 | 72,957                  | 69,400                  | 51,885                       | 49,167       |
| 1987 | 116,290                 | 113,300                 | 76,068                       | 75,599       |
| 1989 | 180,950                 | 102,200                 | 98,194                       | 91,610       |
| 1990 | 200,000                 | 109,000                 | 83,677                       | 82,345       |
| 1991 | 208,125                 | 110,000                 | 78,800                       | 74,577       |
| 1992 | 185,500                 | 101,500                 | 72,948                       | 68,942       |

Source: Islington Gazette, average prices for selected years 1955-1991; Power, 1972:4; Copping Joyce, house list 1992; Nationwide Building Society, summary sheets for house prices, London region 1973-1992; Williams, 1976:74; London Research Centre, 1990:20.

During fieldwork in the Summer of 1992 I concluded that only a few areas in Barnsbury remained to be gentrified (see Figure 5.4): Offord Road, where renovation was in evidence and delapidated property was available for renovation. Barnsbury Square where an old factory, Mica House (Plate 5.6), was in the process of being renovated into 6 apartments with a swimming pool and roof gardens. Richmond

Avenue off Hemingford Road where a house was being advertized as a "Complete Freehold Wreck". On the other hand, I predict that Caledonian Road (Plate 5.7) will not become as upmarket as most other streets in Barnsbury, it remains an area of working class homes and bedsits, cheap shops and wholesalers, chip shops and slot machine arcades and mixed in a considerable volume of public housing.

**Table 5.11 Top Ten London Boroughs by Average House Prices, 1989 (£)**

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Kensington and Chelsea | 158,900 |
| Westminster            | 140,600 |
| Richmond               | 128,000 |
| Camden                 | 122,400 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 116,100 |
| Tower Hamlets          | 107,500 |
| Islington              | 102,200 |
| Harrow                 | 101,100 |
| Hounslow               | 99,400  |
| Bromley                | 95,900  |

Source: London Research Centre, 1990:11, Halifax Building Society Mortgage Approvals.

Table 5.10 shows that sales in Barnsbury continued to increase until 1991, then in 1992 there was a profit decrease of approximately £20,000. Again disguised by the aggregate statistics in Table 5.10, property prices in Islington as a whole declined by 5 per cent in 1990 and by 14 per cent from September to December 1990. Houses were difficult to sell. David Tribe of Winkworth Estate Agents said:

*"The market for flats is very, very buoyant but anything over £140,000-150,000 is very, very slow...people are moving from the lower priced properties...back into rented accommodation, as such rents have increased"* (Islington Gazette, 31.1.91).

Indeed repossessions in Barnsbury and Islington began to be listed in the Islington Gazette from 1991 onwards. Yet Barnsbury real estate agents Holden Matthews (1990 Brochure) said:

*"Things in the property market may have been better, but reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated...At Holden Matthews we have sold property consistently through this depression".*

Indeed, in interviews with real estate agents in Barnsbury a similar story was told:

*"Repossessions don't affect Barnsbury particularly - maybe people who bought in Barnsbury have managed to do fairly well for themselves and keep their jobs. The loss of jobs in the city generally has come at a time when the housing market is pretty flat so it's difficult to see how it has affected Barnsbury or whether it's because the housing market's flat" (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).*

Instead real estate agents argue that people in Barnsbury are looking at their property differently today:

*"I think people are owning property for different reasons now, five years ago it was to try and make a profit, if you didn't get on the housing ladder you thought you were going to miss the boat forever. They don't see it that way now...I hope people are looking at it as a house to live in, to make themselves comfortable in it. If they haven't lost any money over five years they've had a nice place for five years, so what if they haven't made a profit" (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).*

Does the real estate story in Park Slope differ from that in Barnsbury? In New York the real estate industry has avoided much of the capital concentration seen in London, rather it remains predominantly a local business focusing on local neighbourhoods.

The real estate market in Park Slope is locally based:

*"There are no national realtors, we don't have a multiple listing in Park Slope. The whole of Brooklyn doesn't really have multiple listing, there are four agencies who do multiple listing, they send it out to Marine Park, Queens, Staten Island, but they don't get anybody. Basically it's each agency for himself - you're out there scrambling, trying to get listings - it's very crazy" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*



Most realtors in Park Slope get customers from their local advertizements or word of mouth.

The real estate market in Park Slope has changed over time according to the successive life cycles of the area. In the early 1970s (as mentioned in section 5.2.1), there was a dual real estate market (O'Hanlon, 1982:145), one for blacks and one for whites. Blockbusting realtors would send out information on houses being for sale that were not for sale (Civic News, 1962:25:9), and brokers would buy houses from families in the poorer area west of 7th Avenue and sell them to blacks and hispanics at twice the price. This led to an increase in racial violence. In interviews with Park Slope realtors in 1978, O'Hanlon and Justa found brokers describing overt discrimination against blacks. Their views were based on the premise of the arrogance of blacks towards whites, the fear of crime, the decline of property values, and the inability to rent to whites when blacks moved into a building (Justa, 1984). In the late 1970s blacks and hispanics continued to rent and buy in north-west Park Slope below 5th Avenue. The south-west was white working class and the south-east mixed income. South of 9th Street demand was mixed, brokers would specialize in different ethnic groups, blacks were moving from north of Flatbush and hispanics from nearby. These groups wanted Park blocks but they had difficulty in acquiring their choices. Brokers and sellers discriminated against blacks more than hispanics.

Today in Park Slope there is a dual real estate market less in terms of colour, and more in terms of income, the dichotomy is between middle and upper income groups.



In interviews realtors stated that both income groups are looking for the same type of property, but the upper income groups attain property on the "Gold Coast" in the big Victorian houses on a named street next to Prospect Park (Plate 5.8). The compromise between income groups is location, not architectural detail, although the type of architecture does affect the degree of turnover. Those areas of Park Slope which contain predominantly woodframe property have a slow turnover. Many of these areas of houses are stable, owned by the longstanding Irish and Italian population and handed on from one generation to another (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992). But despite the absence of a dual real estate market by colour, some colour differentials remain in the 1990s. The rental market between blacks and whites is fairly equal, but more whites buy property in the area than blacks. Hispanics tend to rent and not buy, for there are more middle class blacks in New York than middle class hispanics. Parts of Park Slope are more hispanic, from 9th Street to 16th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues is hispanic, Italian, and as the street numbers increase Polish, this area is very working class. Sunset Park, south of Park Slope is very Spanish (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992). When asked the question "Why are blacks attracted to Park Slope?", one realtor answered:

*"Park Slope is not massively multi-racial but it is totally racially tolerant. If you can afford to buy a house your neighbour is going to like you pretty much".*

When asked how do hispanics fair in Park Slope, the same realtor answered:

*"I would say it falls into economics. Working class Puerto Ricans are more comfortable on working class blocks and very accepted. A working class black family would be less accepted, the old Italian, Irish and Polish combination holds comfortably".*

This is quite different to the state of play in the 1960s when there was gang warfare on 5th Avenue between the hispanics and the Italians (section 5.2.1).

In Park Slope the price of real estate has increased substantially since 1960. In 1960 the average value of a residential building was \$15,620, in 1970 it was \$24,350 (U.S. Census). In 1975 the average price was \$47,000 and in 1980 this rose to \$75,200 (New York City Department of City Planning, 1985-25). Despite these figures the price of the average renovated C19th rowhouse is not that extravagant (see Table 5.12). For example, an architect, H. Dickson McKenna estimated that in 1976 prices it would cost over a quarter of a million dollars to build a brownstone containing five levels and covering approximately 4,000 sq. ft. H. Dickson McKenna argued,

*"Now that we know what it would cost to replace a fine old brownstone we should have more respect for them, and should cherish our endangered species".*

**Table 5.12 A 1976 Costing for the Construction of a Brownstone**

| Task                       | Cost in \$     |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Excavation                 | 2,100          |
| Concrete                   | 19,200         |
| Rough Carpentry            | 8,600          |
| Roofing                    | 3,400          |
| Masonry                    | 71,000         |
| Interior Finishing         | 70,300         |
| Kitchen / Bath Furnishings | 5,400          |
| Plumbing                   | 13,000         |
| Fireplaces                 | 6,000          |
| Electric                   | 5,600          |
| Heating / Air Conditioning | 9,000          |
| General Contracting        | 39,000         |
| <b>Total Cost</b>          | <b>252,000</b> |

Source: The Brownstoner, 1976:7:4:3; The Phoenix, May 6th 1976; and O'Hanlon, 1982.

By 1984 the average sales price throughout Park Slope was between \$275,000 and \$300,000, yet the blocks nearest to Prospect Park averaged about \$550,000 (Gordon, 1984). In 1985 39 per cent of Park Slope's property was priced at over \$200,000, the highest percentage in Brooklyn, in contrast Bedford Stuyvesant which shares a physical boundary with Park Slope had the lowest property prices in Brooklyn along with Brownsville (Municipal Research Institute, 1986b:94). The property boom of the mid-1980s caused a great increase in sales prices (1986 saw the height of the New York City real estate boom), since then the values have stabilized somewhat. In 1990 the average sales price<sup>38</sup> in Park Slope was \$313,200 (Source: Property Transaction File, New York City Department of City Planning). Table 5.13 breaks these aggregate statistics down and shows the trends in sales prices of different residential buildings in Park Slope 1974-1990.

**Table 5.13 Trends in Residential Sales Prices by Building Type in Park Slope 1974-1990 (# Sold and Average Price \$000's)**

| Year | Residential Type |       |          |       |              |       |                   |       |
|------|------------------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|      | 1 Family         |       | 2 Family |       | Condominiums |       | Old Law Tenements |       |
|      | #                | Price | #        | Price | #            | Price | #                 | Price |
| 1974 | 24               | 44    | 68       | 35    | -            | -     | 55                | 30    |
| 1975 | 50               | 49    | 129      | 42    | -            | -     | 102               | 30    |
| 1976 | 55               | 55    | 121      | 41    | -            | -     | 89                | 30    |
| 1977 | 70               | 59    | 140      | 40    | -            | -     | 105               | 33    |
| 1978 | 57               | 73    | 151      | 49    | -            | -     | 108               | 40    |
| 1979 | 65               | 70    | 147      | 59    | -            | -     | 137               | 46    |
| 1980 | 52               | 92    | 148      | 65    | -            | -     | 141               | 49    |
| 1981 | 58               | 118   | 122      | 81    | -            | -     | 141               | 99    |
| 1982 | 38               | 139   | 74       | 91    | -            | -     | 94                | 107   |
| 1983 | 62               | 149   | 95       | 136   | -            | -     | 86                | 99    |
| 1984 | 47               | 178   | 105      | 143   | 2            | -     | 44                | 122   |

<sup>38</sup> This data subsumes 2 missing values, prices for old law tenements and elevator apartments.

| Year | Residential Type |       |          |       |              |       |                   |       |
|------|------------------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|      | 1 Family         |       | 2 Family |       | Condominiums |       | Old Law Tenements |       |
|      | #                | Price | #        | Price | #            | Price | #                 | Price |
| 1985 | 43               | 222   | 94       | 214   | 19           | 135   | 35                | 136   |
| 1986 | 44               | 351   | 113      | 297   | 57           | 118   | 12                | 194   |
| 1987 | 37               | 355   | 82       | 289   | 102          | 138   | 18                | 229   |
| 1988 | 21               | 334   | 79       | 317   | 47           | 171   | 2                 | -     |
| 1989 | 36               | 423   | 72       | 333   | 35           | 153   | 6                 | -     |
| 1990 | 35               | 386   | 76       | 284   | 46           | 121   | 3                 | -     |

| Year | Residential Type |       |                |       |                     |       |
|------|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|      | Small Walk-Ups   |       | Large Walk-Ups |       | Elevator Apartments |       |
|      | #                | Price | #              | Price | #                   | Price |
| 1974 | 15               | 48    | 38             | 41    | 3                   | -     |
| 1975 | 19               | 72    | 70             | 51    | 2                   | -     |
| 1976 | 24               | 54    | 72             | 55    | 3                   | -     |
| 1977 | 22               | 44    | 101            | 52    | 2                   | -     |
| 1978 | 32               | 68    | 115            | 62    | 6                   | 824   |
| 1979 | 42               | 58    | 148            | 72    | 6                   | 507   |
| 1980 | 25               | 68    | 117            | 88    | 2                   | -     |
| 1981 | 32               | 94    | 86             | 126   | 5                   | 1023  |
| 1982 | 58               | 92    | 79             | 162   | 6                   | -     |
| 1983 | 77               | 144   | 66             | 237   | 2                   | -     |
| 1984 | 156              | 180   | 92             | 294   | 7                   | 1898  |
| 1985 | 147              | 192   | 71             | 315   | 5                   | -     |
| 1986 | 158              | 254   | 102            | 322   | 9                   | 2887  |
| 1987 | 105              | 265   | 95             | 301   | 3                   | -     |
| 1988 | 72               | 349   | 48             | 521   | 2                   | -     |
| 1989 | 53               | 301   | 37             | 425   | 1                   | -     |
| 1990 | 58               | 286   | 31             | 489   | 1                   | -     |

Source: Property Transaction File, New York City Department of City Planning.

Alongside sales prices median monthly contract rents increased significantly in Park Slope from \$43 in 1950, to \$566 in 1990 (U.S. Census). Table 5.14 illustrates how rapidly rents increased in Park Slope in comparison to the averages in Brooklyn and New York City.

**Table 5.14 Median Monthly Rents (\$) in New York City, Brooklyn and Park Slope 1970-1990**

| Year | New York city | Brooklyn | Park Slope |
|------|---------------|----------|------------|
| 1970 | 89            | 95       | 88         |
| 1980 | 193           | 192      | 202        |
| 1990 | 428           | 448      | 566        |

Source: U.S. Census.

Commercial rents also increased substantially during the 1970s and 1980s. An average commercial rent for say a small grocery store in 1972 was \$150-\$300, by 1982 this had increased to \$800-\$1,200. Unlike residential tenants in rent stabilized or rent controlled apartments, commercial tenants had few protections; they could be evicted in 30 days and there was no ceiling on rent increases (Powell, 1982):

*"Turnover has been the name of the game on 7th Avenue during the last few years, with old stores and new stores coming and going at a rapid rate" (Gershun, 1975a).*

Sales turnover for all property types declined from a peak in 1986 when 488 properties in Park Slope changed hands, to 231 properties changing hands in 1989, and only 174 in 1991 (Realty Sales Service of Brooklyn, New York, 1986,1989; REDI Real Estate Information Service, 1991). Realtors date the decline of the real estate market in Park Slope to around the stock market crash. Prices of houses fell to their 1985 price, coming down by about \$100,000:

*"Everyone dates it [the real estate recession] to the stock market crash in October, realistically things had slowed down by August before the stock market crash. Things had just gotten too expensive, the numbers didn't work anymore, if you took the value of 4 apartments and you multiply how much they were charging for each of them the building just wasn't worth that on its own. I mean it got to be the sum of its parts just didn't equal what it was supposed to equal. Areas that had a feeling of being up and coming blocks in Prospect Heights, areas that had been bad neighbourhoods and run down areas were beginning to perk up stopped after '87 and in fact slid back about two steps" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

People took a financial loss depending on a number of factors:

*"Depends when they bought. If they bought at the height of the market, yes. If they bought earlier they're just taking a psychological - 'Gee if we sold in '87 we would have been rich'. But they're buying in that market something they wouldn't of been able to look at in '87 when the prices were high. That's their only consolation, they don't make their killing but they're buying up" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

The decline in coop sales was a very important factor in the real estate recession in Park Slope:

*"1987 - a deadly year! And that's what hurt the housing market, most people bought houses second and coops first. All of a sudden they couldn't sell their coops and it froze them out of the housing market. Now after they absolutely have to...they are either taking a tremendous loss and just paying off the mortgage, not taking out any equity, or they're saying, 'O.K. we're going to keep it running about even and we'll go back to the bank of mom and dad and borrow another downpayment and buy a house" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

Coop conversions declined in Park Slope in the late 1980s because banks would not provide financing unless 51 per cent of the units were sold. Previously only 15 per cent of the units needed to be empty. Banks changed their policy because buildings especially in Manhattan were losing money because rental tenants some of whom were in rent controlled or stabilized apartments were paying less rent than the maintenance cost. Ironically in Park Slope this was less of an issue for even rent controlled or stabilized tenants were paying similar amounts for the maintenance. So although they were not making money, they were not losing money either, and they were able to wait it out. In Park Slope the average maintenance is \$350, the fee is much higher in Manhattan (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).



Data from the 1991 REDI Realty Report, a compilation of recorded deed transfers in Brooklyn provides some examples of financial losses taken in the sale of property in 1991. A 4-family walk-up apartment on President Street was purchased for \$400,000 in June 1987, and sold at a loss for \$288,000 in the first half of 1991. A one family city residence on Lincoln Place was purchased for \$540,000 in August 1988 and sold at a loss for \$407,500 in the second half of 1991. One sign that the market has slowed down substantially is that the time taken to look for property has become longer:

*"THESE PEOPLE ARE HUNTING! When you ask people if they are new to the market they say 'Yes, we've only seen 30 homes'. In the old days when the market was fast the average coop person looked for about 45 days, which basically gave them weekends to do open houses plus appointments with individual ones in the evening. Then when the market started slowing down, the average was 90 days in the marketplace. Then when it got dead, it was more 3-4 cycles of 90 days, they would stop and leave the market place, then they would regroup for like a season and then come back in. I had one realtor tell me that she has a longer relationship with her customers now than most of the men in her life!"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

When prices got too expensive and there was little property left on nice blocks, people were again willing to be urban pioneers. Gentrifiers moved to the less safe and more inconvenient areas, to for example, Prospect Heights "a little scarier neighbourhood". People became willing to move to south Slope, a stable working class community, with only the F-train as a subway link which is inconvenient for Wall Street. South Slope is perceived as,

*"improving as opposed to backsliding like Prospect Heights or between 4th and 5th Avenue straight across the Slope; 5th Avenue is really the end of where people want to be"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

The more recent clients have been Manhattanites who were previously looking for big expensive coops, and they are saying,

*"wait a minute I can buy a house on a nice block, I can have two floors, I can have total control of my life and a rental income for the same money..[it also means]..they've built in their next move, if they need more space 5 years from now, they can take over another floor in the house, they don't have to move" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

In the 1990s the most fluid part of the real estate market in Park Slope has been in rentals. Coop conversions caused a decline in rentals in Park Slope throughout the 1980s, but during the late 1980s and early 1990s the coop market became saturated and due to the recession people had problems selling their coops. As a result people moved and put their coops up for rent. In Barnsbury owner occupiers have been doing the same thing during the real estate recession. In Park Slope this is affecting the apartment rental sector:

*"Now all of a sudden those apartments that got rented year after year, and the landlord didn't spend a dollar...the landlords are taking a wack in their rent. Because now, people can get clean white walls, track lighting, new floors, 3 bedrooms, washer drier hook-up and a dishwasher for the same price" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

Like in Barnsbury, most realtors in Park Slope, when interviewed in the Spring of 1992, were optimistic that the real estate market would pick up:

*"Hope springs eternal, my husband keeps saying '95. I think this is going to be an excellent Spring, there's a lot of action...when you sit across looking at the Park, you see the trees almost beginning to go into bud - it's that same kind of thing, a lot of houses are going into contract; granted lower than the seller wanted them to, but they're going. I think we're going to get rid of a lot of these houses that have been on the market unrealistically priced. Their expectations were inflated based on 1987. We had one house on the Park block that went on the market for \$550,000, when she lowered it to \$450,000 she at least got people to look at it. She sold it for \$375,000, it was a beautiful house, it needed a lot of work. In the old days to get your price you'd paint it, you'd put in a new bathroom floor, and made all the cosmetic changes. Now just to sell it you have to do that" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

To summarize, there are a number of differences between the real estate market in Park Slope and that in Barnsbury. The real estate industry in Barnsbury is relatively national in outlook. The real estate market has been influenced by government housing policy and local and national economic trends. The real estate industry in Park Slope is localized. The real estate market has gone through periods of boom and crisis related to the local and national economy. There is a racial and ethnic dimension to the real estate market in Park Slope, this is not evident in Barnsbury which is a predominantly white neighbourhood. Interestingly, Barnsbury and Park Slope have responded similarly to real estate recession, by letting out houses and apartments which they could not sell or were not prepared to sell at a loss. Now I want to turn from real estate to the capital market and its trends.

### **5.5 Capital Market and Trends**

In this section I illustrate the availability of money for gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope by discussing trends in the capital market.

England has a three-tiered mortgage system: 1. the building societies who usually charge a single cartelized mortgage rate to those who are eligible by borrowing short and lending for a long time; 2. the banks and insurance companies who have a shorter repayment period and charge higher rates; and, 3. local authority lending (practically unheard of today), important for those with lower incomes and those who want to buy old properties (Badcock, 1984:197).

Historically in Britain building societies have been important in enabling the growth of owner occupation. After the Second World War building societies had a surplus of funds due to a decline in the demand for loans, alongside the prevailing flow of repayments and interest. At first the 1945 Labour Government held back these funds in their preference for public housing. The Conservatives then came to power in 1951 and the funds were released with housing policy turning to owner occupation (Boddy, 1980:16-17). But there was little private finance in Islington or Barnsbury until the late 1950s, when the 1959 Housing Purchase and Housing Act made £100 million available to building societies to increase owner occupation and invest in old property. Up until this time building societies, banks and insurance companies did not like to invest in the high risk inner-city. The lack of finance in Islington was a result of a number of factors (see Williams, 1976:74-75): 1. investors money had to be kept secure, and Islington with poor housing, in a limited demand area, was not a secure milieu for investment; 2. most of those seeking mortgages in Islington at this time were skilled workers who failed to meet the financial requirements needed by building societies, especially the larger ones; 3. most of the societies lacked detailed knowledge of the Islington area, hardly any had branch offices in the borough; 4. Islington was to undergo government clearance schemes; 5. suburban investment was far more profitable.

In the early days local authorities and small London based building societies were the only lenders, for they were better able to evaluate local risk. Much of their custom

was lost in the 1960s by the working classes relocating to the suburbs, thus they welcomed an influx of middle class interest in the area. In Islington there were local authority mortgages available from both the Borough and the Greater London Council. In the decade 1965 to 1975 the Borough of Islington allocated approximately 300 mortgages a year, generally to higher socio-economic groups. The Greater London Council was less important, by 1974 it had only 23 mortgages on properties in Islington. Insurance Companies tended to lend on the very expensive Islington property. There was little bank finance. In conclusion,

*"it was extremely difficult to obtain funds during the 1950s and 1960s and that, for house purchases, success in obtaining them was largely a reflection of personal connections" (Williams 1976:76).*

Policies such as the Open Mortgage Scheme 1967, reduced the risk factors for building societies to lend money on old inner-city property. But Williams (1978:23-24) argues that national building societies only began to take a real interest in Islington after 1972, as increasing numbers of the middle classes sought homes in the area. One board of directors visited an architects rehabilitated house to see what their loan had achieved, they were impressed and situations like this increased their confidence in the area and as a result loans increased in Islington (Williams, 1976). In 1967 the Leasehold Reform Act allowed tenants in low rented and long leased accommodation to purchase the freehold of their building in an attempt to increase levels of owner occupation. Policy had begun to move from redevelopment to rehabilitation as the introduction of discretionary improvement grants reveals.



The 1969 Housing Act illustrated the new commitment of the government to rehabilitation instead of renewal. The purpose of the Act was to supplement new housing construction with the rehabilitation of existing housing. The Act provided local authorities with the power to allocate discretionary improvement grants, unlike the existing standard grants which provided money for attaining basic facilities such as toilets, baths, and indoor hot water. The improvement grants were £1,000 for improvement and up to £1,200 for conversion (tax free per dwelling unit created). The grants had to be met pound for pound by the improver, as such they automatically favoured the more well off improver and developers (Hamnett, 1973:252-253), and aided the gentrification process in Barnsbury. Initially there were no restrictions on the improvement grants, as such the property could be sold immediately after rehabilitation/conversion with vast profits being realized. As illustrated in the section on the value gap, tenants were being evicted and rent increases after improvement were high. The Sunday Times (1972) commented:

*"Far from helping the needy, the scheme has drastically decreased the amount of accommodation available for rent, and has provided in its place much more expensive accommodation for sale".*

Yet developers in giving evidence to the Commons Select Committee, argued that because of the profit potential in gentrification they would continue without improvement grants, these were merely the icing on the cake (Hamnett, 1973:261). Indeed Smith (1979b:25) argues that the cooperation of developers and building societies with individual investors is more relevant than government incentives to the British experience of gentrification. I also argue that the relevance of improvement grants can be overstated, for total Islington Borough Council expenditure on



improvement grants never exceeded 1.5 per cent of the total housing budget in any one year. But without overstating their importance, improvement grants were relevant in the gentrification of both Islington and Barnsbury. In 1971 Islington was allocated 455 grants for the category owner occupied and private rented, 171 grants for owner occupied only, and 237 grants for privately rented conversions only. In 1972<sup>39</sup> Islington received 486 grants for owner occupied and private rented property, 150 for owner occupied property only, and 314 for privately rented conversions only (Hamnett, 1973:257, Tables 2 and 3). The percentage of grants being allocated to landlords and developers rather than to owner occupiers was high for Islington, 59.3 per cent from January 1971 to March 1972 (Table 5.15). The House of Commons Expenditure Committee submitted evidence that 10.7 per cent of all Islington's grants 1972-1973 had gone to speculators (House of Commons Expenditure Committee, 1974).

Table 5.16 provides some statistics on the different numbers of conversion and improvement grants in the owner occupied and local authority sector in Islington from 1970 to 1978. It is interesting that owner occupied conversions declined in Islington whilst local authority conversions increased substantially, this reflects Islington Borough Council's policy of municipalization. In the early 1970s owner occupiers were taking up more grants than the local authority, in the late 1970s the opposite scenario emerged.

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<sup>39</sup> These figures are based on the first three quarters of 1972 only.

**Table 5.15 Improvement Grants Allocated to Landlords and Developers in Inner London, January 1971 to March 1972**

| Borough       | Total No. Grants | Grants to Landlords and Developers | % to Landlords and Developers |
|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ken. & Chel.  | 1,655            | 1,148                              | 69.4                          |
| Hammersmith   | 2,229            | 1,149                              | 66.8                          |
| Westminster   | 1,533            | 982                                | 64.1                          |
| Camden        | 1,927            | 1,227                              | 63.7                          |
| Islington     | 1,013            | 601                                | 59.3                          |
| Lambeth       | 1,428            | 804                                | 56.3                          |
| Wandsworth    | 2,202            | 1,200                              | 54.5                          |
| Hackney       | 517              | 229                                | 44.3                          |
| Lewisham      | 918              | 346                                | 33.7                          |
| Greenwich     | 1,210            | 392                                | 32.4                          |
| Southwark     | 934              | 227                                | 24.3                          |
| Tower Hamlets | 235              | 51                                 | 21.7                          |
| Total         | 15,801           | 8,696                              | 55.0                          |

Source: Pearson and Henney, 1972:11, Exhibit 3.

Note: Assumes one grant per dwelling, Greater London Council statistics.

In 1971, 56 per cent of all Islington's conversion grants were allocated to the wards of Barnsbury and St. Peters (Power, 1972:3) revealing the extent of renovation activity in this area at this time. In July 1972 fieldwork in the Barnsbury Ward which assessed the state of repair of property in the area, concluded that 51 per cent of the houses had been converted, 42.5 per cent remained unconverted and 6.5 per cent were undergoing conversion, moreover these results were thought to be a rather conservative estimate of conversion in Barnsbury (Power, 1972:2).

**Table 5.16 A Comparison of Conversion and Improvement Grants in Islington's Owner Occupied and Local Authority Sector 1970-1978**

| Year | Local Authority |             | Owner Occupier |             |
|------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
|      | Conversion      | Improvement | Conversion     | Improvement |
| 1970 | 35              | 8           | 33             | 66          |
| 1971 | 33              | 4           | 82             | 94          |
| 1972 | 82              | 10          | 73             | 105         |
| 1973 | 29              | 12          | 61             | 144         |
| 1974 | 70              | 4           | 36             | 37          |
| 1975 | 187             | 30          | 26             | 48          |
| 1976 | 792             | 105         | 19             | 47          |
| 1977 | 609             | 210         | 15             | 57          |
| 1978 | 608             | 232         | 12             | 45          |

Source: Annual Abstracts of Greater London Statistics.

The 1974 Housing Act clamped down on some of the rampant speculation associated with the 1969 Housing Act. It targeted those areas most in need, as such allocation was associated with location and not related to individual cases, grant eligibility was tightened up. At the same time Islington Borough Council placed its own restrictions on applicants for improvement grants; applicants had to remain in their improved property for five years after rehabilitation. The 1975 Islington Plan revealed that these restrictions had reduced the take up of improvement grants, Islington Borough Council hoped to develop incentives to alter this whilst protecting tenants. The 1977 Islington Borough Plan was concerned that improvement grants were not going to those areas most in need. Then the 1980 (Conservative) Housing Act removed the 1974 restrictions, as a result grant uptake in Islington increased from 181 in 1979/1981 to 337 in 1981/1982. In the 1982 budget, £75 million was made available for property improvement. Grants were increased to cover 90 per cent instead of 75 per cent of the cost of improvement (this was extended until 1984). The official

reason for this change of heart by the Tory government was an attempt to help the construction industry, caught in the mire of the depression, but sceptics cite the early 1980s riots as the instigator (Walencowicz, 1989:24). The Tory government's concentration on property to stimulate the economy is summarized by John Stanley, the Housing Minister in 1983, (Walencowicz, 1989:25):

*"As we start 1983, all the signs are that both new housing building and home improvements will be spearheads of economic recovery this year...a veritable explosion in home improvement is now taking place, with expenditure on improvement more than doubling in the course of just one year".*

From 1979 to 1984 the number of grants in London increased five-fold, yet there was no corresponding decline in the level of disrepair. The grant explosion peaked in 1984 when nearly 230,000 grants were paid out (this was mostly financed by council house sales) (Walencowicz, 1989:26). In the 1982 District Plan and the 1986 Development Plan, Islington Borough Council was still encouraging the take up of improvement grants. Before 1984 improvements had a zero rating in terms of VAT (value added tax), after 1984 VAT was charged on all improvement work (Walencowicz, 1989:64), influencing the decline in the uptake of grants. From 1986 onwards Islington Borough Council reduced its grant allocation because of a lack of funds. A policy of municipalization was followed more stringently by Islington Borough Council, and its money fed this programme more enthusiastically than the improvement grant programme (Islington Development Plan, 1986). Tax relief on the interest of improvement loans was removed in the 1988 budget, affecting take up. In 1988-1989, 35 mandatory renovation grants to a value of £160,000 were allocated to

private houses in Islington, and 27 discretionary renovation grants to a value of £431,000 (Annual Abstracts of Greater London Statistics, 1989/90, Table 111).

Other government schemes which have made capital available for the rehabilitation of old housing in London include the General Improvement Area, the aim being to encourage voluntary action in improving areas of private property. There are usually about 320 houses in a General Improvement Area, and houses in the area receive a higher grant, i.e. 65 per cent as opposed to 50 per cent. Local authorities are encouraged to undertake environmental improvements, for example, landscaping, providing amenities like playgrounds, and to clean up the external appearance of buildings. Local authorities receive special contributions from the Exchequer to help with the costs. Local authorities are also given powers of compulsory purchase over property and can compulsorily improve private rented housing. Another example, Housing Action Areas, were first introduced in 1975 and usually cover about 340 houses. Rapid improvement is sought, again it attempts to stimulate voluntary involvement, the improvement grant in these areas can be increased to 90 per cent in the worst cases (Walencowicz, 1989:45-46). Parts of Barnsbury were designated as a General Improvement Area and a Housing Action Area. Barnsbury is also eligible for capital for property improvements from other sources. After attaining conservation status in 1971 (see Figure 4.2), finance for repairs was available from Local authorities, The National Heritage Memorial Fund, The Architectural Heritage Fund and from Housing Act grants.

Compared to Barnsbury, the capital market and trends associated with gentrification in Park Slope have been more complex. Mortgage sources in the United States include commercial banks, mortgage companies and life insurance companies, but Savings and Loans Associations predominate (Badcock, 1984:198).

Brownstoning in Park Slope was initially undertaken often without assistance, frequently there was active discouragement by local lenders. Gentrification was especially affected in the 1960s and 1970s by the blatant red-lining of the area (the practice of refusing to grant mortgages on the basis of location rather than considering individual credit). One such example, in 1977 a married couple Bart Meyers and Alice Radosh wanted to buy a four-story brownstone in Park Slope, they planned to upgrade and convert the property. The house cost \$79,000, they were prepared to put down \$20,000 in cash. With an annual income of over \$30,000 and no credit problems, they thought they could get the \$59,000 mortgage they needed. They did, but only after going to 61 other banks and even then (like in Barnsbury) only because of a "personal connection" (Fried, 1978:23). These problems were acknowledged in a publication by the Detroit based "Advance Mortgage Corporation" (The Brownstoner, 1980:11:5). The report looked at revitalization in 20 cities and noted the brownstoning phenomena is primarily a "trend of individuals and not government", and that it often begins and achieves without assistance and even by active discouragement from local lenders and government policies. Jan Maruca (1978:3) sums up the problem of gaining access to a mortgage for Park Slope property in the 1970's,



*"...getting a mortgage might be compared to going on a Big Game Safari: it requires careful advance preparation, proper equipment, skillful tracking - and still you may come home with an empty bag".*

Red-lining was spatially differentiated. The north-east of Park Slope tended to remain attractive to banks and blockbusting was limited in this area. On the other hand banks disinvested heavily in the north-west, mortgage companies increased their activity in this area and then withdrew from the market in 1975, then private mortgages and cash financed most sales. In the south-east and south-west bank investment declined but this area suffered less, being located away from the centres of black and hispanic population around Flatbush and 5th Avenues (O'Hanlon, 1982; Justa, 1984).

People could not get their wood frame dwellings insured, so they had difficulty getting mortgages because banks required property insurance on financed homes (O'Hanlon, 1982:211). In response to this, some of the pioneer gentrifiers set up their own insurance businesses to solve this problem and indeed became profitable:

*"There used to be only one insurance agency. Now I guess there are more, it's really a closing cost on buying a house. I mean the bank wants to see a years worth. They don't want to own a burnt down building"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

A Park Slope insurance man, John Cassara, founded The Brownstone Agency which offers an insurance policy especially for brownstones built before 1910 and occupied by no more than 10 people (Osler, 1979a:A25).

O'Hanlon (1982:193) provides some information on capital trends in Park Slope during the main phase of gentrification 1965-1980 (Table 5.17). Private mortgages were consistently used throughout the period, but bank mortgages became more

important after 1975, probably due to the 1977 Federal Community Reinvestment Act which outlawed the discrimination caused by red-lining undertaken by specific financial institutions. In 1978 the act became state law in New York, and the financial institutions in Park Slope had to improve their mortgage/loan schemes. Interestingly cash sales have also been important as a means of purchasing property in Park Slope, 1970 in particular stands out, this could be related to cash purchases by pioneering gentrifiers in a time when red-lining was rife in the area.

**Table 5.17 Methods of Financing Sales of Residential Property in Park Slope 1965-1980**

| Method           | Year |      |      |      |      |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1978 | 1980 |
| Cash             | 78   | 170  | 106  | 109  | 126  |
| Assumed Mortgage | 33   | 38   | 37   | 35   | 23   |
| Private Mortgage | 180  | 188  | 207  | 164  | 220  |
| Mortgage Company | 41   | 175  | 9    | 18   | 5    |
| Bank Mortgage    | 162  | 159  | 81   | 173  | 193  |
| Total            | 494  | 730  | 440  | 499  | 567  |

Source: O'Hanlon, 1982:193: Table 4.3 from the Brooklyn Real Estate Register.

Probably affected by the 1977 Act and the 1978 Law and by grass roots pressure groups, local commercial and savings banks initiated liberal mortgage programmes in Park Slope after 1978 (O'Hanlon, 1982:150). Chase Manhattan Bank produced the Urban Home Loan Programme which was designed to booster the rehabilitation of vacant 1-4 family residential homes, offering acquisition, construction and permanent financing in one package at its prime lending rate. Citibank became the main lending institution (Table 5.18) for most of the brownstone neighbourhoods in Brooklyn (Municipal Research Institute, 1986b:121). Citibank (in fliers) lays claim as "the bank

that helped preserve Park Slope's history", and boasts of its help during the active red-lining of the area, "we've shown our commitment to the Slope by providing mortgage money when the market was tight". Citibank began its "Stretch Program" in Park Slope as a way of answering the needs of a growing neighbourhood. Citibank wants to be recognized as Park Slope's neighbourhood bank, for example they designed a special shopping bag - The Citibank Tote Bag - with a distinctive Park Slope logo. Their commitment to the rehabilitation of Park Slope is expressed as follows;

*"face lifts for neighbourhoods, to help them age gracefully...like the Garfield Place restoration, financed in part by the Citicorp Community Development...Citibank Cares, and We're Doing Something About It!"* (Citibank flier).

But the attitude of banks overall has been quite fickle throughout the gentrification process:

*"When I first started working (10 years ago) banks made tremendous amounts of demand and I think the paper work was very strict. Then as the economy picked up, the interest rates lowered and there were many banks hungry to do business, their requirements became very loose. Now as a result of numerous financial institutions going into the red, in some cases many of their requirements have become stricter. Years ago you could purchase something with 10% down, 5% down, now it's a minimum of at least 20 per cent"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

By the late 1980s purchase money mortgages dominated the mortgage market in Park Slope, Citibank's share in the market declined from 14 per cent in 1986 to 7 per cent in 1991 (Table 5.19).

**Table 5.18 Mortgages on 1-6 Family Dwellings in Community District 6 (Park Slope) 1984**

| Institution                | Number of Mortgages | Total \$ Volume in 000's |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Citibank N.A.              | 835                 | 23,800                   |
| Williamsburgh Savings Bank | 78                  | 4,053                    |
| Greenpoint Savings Bank    | 135                 | 2,695                    |
| Purchase Money Mortgages   | 37                  | 1,750                    |

Source: Municipal Research Institute, 1986b:123.

Note: \* Institutions ranked by total dollar volume.

**Table 5.19 Top Six Mortgages Used in Park Slope 1986, 1989 and 1991**

| 1986 |                                 |                      |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rank | Mortgage                        | % of Total Mortgages |
| #1   | Purchase Money Mortgage         | 24                   |
| #2   | Citibank                        | 14                   |
| #3   | Private Business Lender         | 13                   |
| #4   | Dime Savings Bank               | 12                   |
| #5   | Greenpoint Savings Bank         | 5                    |
| #6   | Independence Savings Bank       | 4                    |
| 1989 |                                 |                      |
| Rank | Mortgage                        | % of Total Mortgages |
| #1   | Purchase Money Mortgage         | 16                   |
| #2   | Greenpoint Savings Bank         | 13                   |
| #3   | Citibank                        | 11                   |
| #4   | Private Business Lender         | 9                    |
| #5   | First Nationwide Savings        | 6                    |
| #6   | Chase Home Mortgage Corporation | 4                    |

| 1991 |                                 |                      |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rank | Mortgage                        | % of Total Mortgages |
| #1   | Purchase Money Mortgage         | 21                   |
| #2   | Chemical Bank                   | 12                   |
| #3   | Citibank                        | 7                    |
| #4   | Chase Home Mortgage Corporation | 6                    |
| #5   | Arbor National Mortgage         | 4                    |
|      | Dale Mortgage Bankers           |                      |
|      | Gelt Funding Corporation        |                      |
|      | Private Business Lender         |                      |
| #6   | Manufacturers Hanover           | 3                    |
|      | Apple Bank for Savings          |                      |
|      | Chase Manhattan Bank            |                      |

Source: 1986,1989 Realty Sales Service of Brooklyn, New York, Real Estate Data, Inc. and 1991 REDI Realty Report, REDI Real Estate Information Service.

Gentrification in the United States is actively planned and publically funded, a result according to Smith (1979b:25) of the fact that middle class flight to the suburbs was more complete, and any movement back to the city looked unlikely. As such United States Federal government and State governments offered/offer a variety of positive incentives to gentrification (see Zukin, 1982[1988]; Smith et al. 1989; Smith, 1990). Sleeper (1982a:169) talking about Park Slope, finds gentrification to be legitimized from a variety of institutional sources, the federal government being only one of these;

*"In Washington...an Administration especially solicitous of middle-class needs has given champions of our born again neighborhoods fresh hope of banishing the subsidized housing they claim despoils the rebuilding of their kingdom and coodles their lower income-neighbors into indolence, and insolence".*

Zukin (1982[1988]:149) finds that gentrification in New York is also legitimized at the state level:

*"...subsidies in the form of tax advantages and zoning dispensations have formed the currency of exchange between developers and the State. Using these subsidies to*

*contract with the private sector for change in the built environment takes the place of trying to plan redevelopment".*

There have been a variety of federal programmes which have provided capital for gentrification in Park Slope (The Brownstoner, 1983:14:4:1-3): 1. Section 203(k) Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance, where the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insured private loans for the purchase and rehabilitation of 1-4 unit properties. The FHA insured the mortgages before the rehabilitation took place, therefore lenders were able to release funds as work progressed. 2. Community Development Block Grants<sup>40</sup>, a locally administered Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programme whereby low interest loans and grants were made available for the rehabilitation of single and multi-family units. Usually the grant went to low or moderate income applicants. In 1980, New York City got the largest community development block grant in the country, 76 per cent of New York's community district allocations between 1974 and 1981 were allocated to housing and related activities (New York City, Office of Management and Budget, 1981, in Justa 1984). 3. Through Urban Homesteading, HUD transferred vacant and abandoned houses to the City, who offered them up for sale at a nominal sum, i.e. \$1.00, to families willing to rehabilitate and live in the houses for at least three years. Once a family began to live in a house it

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<sup>40</sup> The Community Development Block Grant was born during the presidency of Richard Nixon. They were applied for on the basis of statistics from low income areas, yet at the time of allocation they were used to incite the rehabilitation of middle class areas (Pratt Center for Community and Environment Development, 1976, in Justa, 1984). In the late 1970s the situation improved somewhat as the Federal Government insisted cities followed a 75 per cent means test, which asserted that 75 per cent of a programme's funds should be used in projects that would help the low/moderate income groups. Therein the City began to acquire derelict property and some "redistributive programmes" emerged, for example, sweat equity and grants/loans to low income home owners (see Justa, 1984).



had to be brought up to housing code standards within 18 months. Title to ownership being obtainable after 3 years. It was usually only applicable to single family dwellings. 4. Section 312 Rehabilitation loans from HUD provided low interest, 20 year loans for housing rehabilitation. Single, multi-family and mixed use properties were eligible. Priority was given to low or moderate income applicants, the interest rate being higher for wealthier borrowers. 5. Section 223(f) mortgage insurance was provided to buy or moderately repair existing rental housing. The FHA insured loans used to buy or re-finance mortgages on apartment buildings which were at least three years old. Private lenders could insure up to 15 per cent of a 223(f) insured loan, while the FHA insured the balance. In return for sharing part of the risk, lenders were allowed to process the loans themselves, therein avoiding the red tape and long delays associated with FHA processing. 6. With Title I Home Improvement Loans the FHA would insure up to 90 per cent of a home improvement loan. The interest rate floating below that of the conventional market. 7. Urban Development Action Grants were granted by the HUD to economically distressed communities, giving financial assistance to private developers or property owners. They favoured commercial and industrial projects.

Alongside these federal capital incentives for gentrification, two municipal tax exemption/deduction programmes were available from New York City. The J-51 programme<sup>41</sup> has helped the rehabilitation of many areas (see Zukin,

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<sup>41</sup> "...conversions that qualify for J-51 benefits must meet certain conditions that are supposed to guarantee an increased number of apartments for middle-class housing at affordable rents" (Zukin, 1982:159). The J-51 program benefits under 4 major categories: 1. major capital improvements, replacement windows, boilers, roofs, etc.; 2. substantial rehabilitation; 3. non-residential and single

1982[1988]:158-163). It contains a dual tax break: firstly, tax exemption of 12 years on the increase in a buildings assessed dollar value due to improvements, and secondly, an annual tax abatement and reduction of up to 8.33 per cent of the reasonable cost of the improvements for between nine and twenty years:

*"Although this offers relief to the small landlord who would not be able to raise rents sufficiently to cover the cost of increased taxes, it really is advantageous to the developer who practises economy of scale. A gut rehabilitation, with its commensurately great increase in value, gets a better tax break than a minor improvement. It is also significant that by extending these tax benefits to residential conversions, the city administration defines them as a socially desirable form of upgrading" (Zukin, 1982[1988]:159).*

On the other hand the 421B programme provides similar subsidies for the reconstruction of 1+2 family buildings.

How important were these federal and state programmes for the gentrification of Park Slope?

It was noted that by 1979,

*"more than 55% of J-51 benefits were going to middle and upper-middle income neighborhoods such as Greenwich Village, East Side and Upper West Side in Manhattan, Brooklyn Heights and Park Slope in Brooklyn" (Baldwin, 1979<sup>42</sup> cited by Justa, 1984).*

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room occupancy (SRO) conversions; 4. moderate rehabilitation (created 1980), the upgrading of occupied buildings with tenants in place at a certified reasonable cost of over \$2,500 per unit. J-51 has caused a certain ammount of displacement of low/moderate income groups in New York, it has been criticized for displacing small businesses by converting to residential use, and for displacing the poor and elderly from single room occupancies by converting to luxury housing (Justa, 1984). J-51 has come to the aid of white collar workers and to the detriment of blue collar workers in the competition over housing, for there is little available capital for blue collar workers or for their neighbourhoods (see also Jackson, 1985:209).

<sup>42</sup> From Baldwin, S. (1979) "Council Eyes Renewed J-51 Plan for Even Bigger Tax Giveaway in 1979", City Limits, 4:7:9:16.

But in a study of Park Slope, New York City Planning (1985) found that considerable reinvestment had occurred without the assistance of public subsidies. Many of the buildings contained less than 3 units, as such they were not eligible for J-51 benefits and no other subsidy programmes including 421B were widely used. Within the multi-family housing stock, of those housing units rehabilitated between 1970-1980, 1,975 had received tax abatement or exemption through the J-51 programme. This amounted to 9.7 per cent of the areas multi-family apartments in 1980. The use of J-51 to rehabilitate multi-family units was more important in Brooklyn and New York City than in Park Slope (Table 5.20). Those buildings rehabilitated with the help of the J-51 programme in Park Slope 1970-1980 were especially concentrated. To the east of 6th Avenue 71 per cent of the areas units were in J-51 rehabilitated buildings (New York City Department of City Planning, 1985-25:48). In addition to J-51, 165 apartments were rehabilitated through other subsidy programmes 1970-1980; 25 units were rehabilitated through the City's Participation Loan Programme, 12 units through the local Article 8-A low interest loan programme, 26 units through the Federal Section 312 Programme, 102 units through the FHA programmes Section 223 and Section 221(d) which provided mortgage insurance and below market rate financing for the rehabilitation of low income housing (New York City Department of City Planning, 1985-25:41).

**Table 5.20 Rehabilitation Using the J-51 Programme 1970-1980**

| Area          | Units in Buildings<br>Rehabilitated or improved | % Of All Multi Family Units<br>1980 |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Park Slope    | 1,975   | 9.7                                 |
| Brooklyn      | 94,544  | 15.3                                |
| New York City | 376,940   | 17.4                                |

Source: New York City Department of City Planning, 1985-25:Table II-8

Another source of public finance for gentrification in Park Slope is associated with its attainment of landmark status in 1973. The Landmark Conservancy under the Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City offers tax rebates on building restoration and maintenance, or a tax remission advantage to save certain landmarked buildings. Unfortunately there are no statistics available on the volume of property influenced by these advantages.

Table 5.21 provides a summary of mortgage activity in Park Slope 1983-1990. Conventional loans which include FHA loans have gone through periods of increase and decline in both number and dollar amount. Home improvement loans have declined substantially since the mid-1980s. Loans on multi-family property boomed during 1985-1987 correlating with the peak years of condo and coop conversions, thereafter they declined quite rapidly as the coop and condo market became saturated.

**Table 5.21 Mortgage Activity in Park Slope 1983-1990**

| Conventional Loans 1-4 Family Dwellings <sup>43</sup> |        |               |
|---|--------|---------------|
| Year  | Number | Amount \$000s |
| 1983  | 319    | 25,441        |
| 1984  | 641    | 51,535        |
| 1985  | 470    | 53,962        |
| 1986  | 879    | 104,318       |
| 1987  | 919    | 124,911       |
| 1988  | 580    | 78,493        |
| 1989  | 621    | 85,050        |
| 1990  | 317    | 44,564        |

| Home Improvement Loans 1-4 Family Dwellings |        |               |
|---|--------|---------------|
| Year  | Number | Amount \$000s |
| 1983  | 108    | 841           |
| 1984  | 171    | 6,142         |
| 1985  | 85     | 3,190         |
| 1986  | 64     | 1,425         |
| 1987  | 40     | 601           |
| 1988  | 69     | 1,907         |
| 1989  | 91     | 1,556         |
| 1990  | 34     | 1,663         |

| Loans on Multi-family Dwellings (Home Purchase and Home Improvement) |        |               |
|--|--------|---------------|
| Year   | Number | Amount \$000s |
| 1983   | 35     | 8,424         |
| 1984   | 50     | 8,732         |
| 1985   | 149    | 202,000       |
| 1986   | 198    | 30,867        |
| 1987   | 83     | 21,731        |
| 1988   | 66     | 17,130        |
| 1989   | 63     | 16,943        |
| 1990   | 26     | 12,932        |

Source: Mortgage Activity Reports, New York Commission on Human Rights.

<sup>43</sup> Conventional loans are real estate loans that are not insured by the Federal Housing Association or guaranteed by the Veterans Association (see New York State Association of Realtors et al., 1981:185-186).

The variability in the interest rate has affected mortgage rates throughout the stages of gentrification in Park Slope, in the late 1970s the interest rate was as high as 16 per cent, in the mid-1980s it was around 10-12 per cent (Thompson, 1985:23), the 1991 figure was 8.25 per cent<sup>44</sup>. Housing demand in the area has been strongly associated with interest rates as one realtor commented,

*"...a lot more of this is psychology than I ever thought, like when people perceived the market was dropping they wouldn't buy. All those people who would have bought coops in '86, '87, '88, '89, '90, '91, they just froze...all of a sudden the interest rates got real low, and then they went up a teeny bit, now people are feeling oh my god, we're going to miss it!"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

Overall the revitalization of Park Slope has been primarily an act of private initiative and investment, federal and state subsidies being of secondary importance. The cooperation of developers and building societies with individual investors was more relevant in the Barnsbury. Gentrification has been more actively promoted and publically funded in Park Slope than in Barnsbury. This is best interpreted in terms of the fear of ghettoization of inner urban areas in the United States, this relates to the interest of public utility companies in "securing" these areas. Similarly the United States government and agencies such as banks have an interest in revitalizing the inner-city's tax base, the tax base has become distorted with the higher income groups locating in the suburbs. In London devalorization and ghettoization are not as problematic in the private housing market, they are more often a feature of public sector housing. Ghettoization is more associated with racial patterning in the United

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<sup>44</sup> In the U.K. interest rates have been consistently higher than those in the U.S., in 1991 the interest rate in the U.K. was 14.5%.



States than in Britain. This may be one reason why public investment in the gentrification process has been less overt in London than in New York.

## **5.6 Class Differentials and Class Struggle**

The marxist framework acknowledges class as a central feature of the gentrification process. As such I look at class differentials and class struggle in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

Gentrification in Britain has definite class based associations, consider the following statement by William Bell, member of the Greater London Council for Chelsea and Chairman of the Historic Buildings Committee:

*"Sir, of all the tiresome emotive words coined by this generation 'gentrification' must rank among the worst. By its implication of class ridden envy, peculiar I believe to this country and perhaps a symptom of our current malaise, fears of 'gentrification' threaten plans for the rehabilitation of many derelict areas of 'listed' housing in London" (Letter to The Times, 1977).*

In Barnsbury class differentials were especially overt in the early 1970s during gentrification's most active period:

*"One of the tips of that whole iceberg of social pressures which is London is to be found in the Barnsbury district of Islington. Conflict is anachronistically visible there in the outward appearance of houses side by side with one another - some with all the marks of grey poverty; their neighbours smartly repainted and with all the externals of wealth. Whole streets in Barnsbury show these signs of transition; and neighbouring squares can there find themselves each in a different camp - whether of middle-class contentment, or of slums" (Ash, 1972b:32).*

Pitt (1977) expresses class differentials in Barnsbury in terms of living space. He mentions four houses in Lonsdale Square; two of these houses contained single family

middle class owner occupants, whilst the other two houses provided accommodation for forty eight single working class tenants in the furnished rental sector.

The class differentials in Barnsbury during the early 1970s stirred local emotions, some of the locals disliked the middle class newcomers as much as they had disliked ethnic groups in Barnsbury. The following quotation illustrates the irony behind race and class relations in the area:

*"I used to live in Barnsbury. I never did like niggers even though I work with them and lived next door to one. Then Barnsbury types moved in and started preaching to us we shouldn't be prejudiced and should love the blacks and then the b-----s turned right around and kicked them out and then us after" (Power, 1972).*

Hall (1972) mentions the fact that adjacent to the gentrifying Barnsbury was one of the most squalid ghettos in London; Susan Zwinoira a community worker in the area said that the ghetto was worse than some of the worst ghettos in the United States:

*"Meanwhile, the middle class professionals of Barnsbury, with characteristic British complacency and hypocrisy, go on tending their own little garden".*

Class struggle had its roots in these class differentials. With an influx of people from the middle classes associated with gentrification, many of the working class local people resented the feeling that their lives were being run for them by the incoming middle class without their consent, as such class conflict occurred,

*"...many working class people resented the influx of 'Chelseaites'; that is middle class immigrants with totally different lifestyles and value orientations" (Ferris, 1972:44).*

Those tenants in bad housing who felt threatened by the council were appalled to see the council spending money on a traffic scheme, tree planting and new iron railings in

smarter squares. The local residents were resentful that their children could not afford to live locally, in houses that they had "saved" during the war. They wanted to keep small industrial units in Barnsbury, whereas the incomers saw these as non-conforming elements in the townscape and preferred antique shops and small offices which offered no employment to the locals (Pitt, 1977:16). In 1972 the Harpers and Queen Magazine told home purchasers to: "Ignore Islington where an outbreak of class war is brewing" (Pitt, 1977:9). One company sold its Barnsbury property to Islington Borough Council in 1973, stating: "We're getting out of Islington...because of all the trouble caused us, it's simply not worth it" (Pitt, 1977:9).

*"Local estate agents in fact bore the brunt of frustrations that had built up among tenants, for whom the 'For Sale' and 'Sold' signs were as offensive as the Union Jack must have been to those under British colonial rule" (Pitt, 1977:10).*

One particular story illustrates the strength of feeling of some of the locals in Barnsbury at the property speculation going on in their area. It became known as "The Prebbles Affair" (Time Out, 1975;1976). The affair began in March 1974 when the group, Islington Tenants Crusade decided to act against the activities of the property company Prebbles:

*"Bitterness surrounded the firms involvement in the middle class invasion of fashionable Barnsbury, its management of property owned by speculators Chalk and Gwyn Jones, and most recently its serving of notices to quit on 40 tenants in two houses".*

The group picketed Prebbles Upper Street office. After a few months Prebbles applied for a court injunction, it was granted. People were arrested, one jailed, and Prebbles was placed under police protection. Months later the injunction remained,

freedom of speech was seen as less important than a firm's business. Some time later Prebbles alleged libel (from the pickets placards), nuisance (interference with business), and conspiracy. Due to allegations of libel the accused were not eligible for legal aid, so a defence fund was set up, the money provided by, for example, sponsored walks in which MPs took part, and videos lobbying trade unions. The whole protest appeared to have an effect for the number of complaints against Prebbles declined, and Islington Borough Council was to intervene in badly managed property. Some time later Prebbles dropped the case (Islington Gazette, 1.9.78). The court victory by Prebbles produced some evocative statements from James Pitt (The Tribune, 22.11.74) who led the picketers:

*"My involvement stemmed from the frustrations of working in Barnsbury, the birthplace of the word 'gentrification'...for every group of tenants that resists, there are many individuals who are picked off in ones and twos. Worn away by constant visits from landlord's 'agents', often unannounced and late at night; driven to desperation by leaking roofs and draughty windows; seduced sometimes by offers of thousands of pounds; even the strongest can crack".*

But this picture of locals versus gentrifiers is misleading because class struggle in Barnsbury was complicated by demarcations within these two sides. Indeed according to Ash (1972b:32) Barnsbury is interesting because,

*"...the battle there is not so much upon the front lines of a war of attrition, as it takes the form of a confused melee. There are signs of turmoil of an unusual order".*

A look at the two main pressure groups in the area illustrates this (see also Chapter 6.3). The Barnsbury Association were essentially pro-conservation and the Barnsbury Action Group anti-gentrification. On the surface the division appears to be between the middle class owner occupiers and the working class tenants. But this division was

complicated by divisions between the old middle class Islingtonians and the new middle class Islingtonians, and between the middle class immigrants on what constituted a desirable place to live. In meetings of the Barnsbury Action Group it is interesting to observe that the working class tended to emphasize housing issues such as landlord and tenant relations, whereas the middle class were more interested in the traffic and environmental problems. The confusion which class struggle in Barnsbury produced is seen in the following letter from a middle class gentrifier:

*"Sir, The Socialists are determined that we should sit side by side to be educated and lie side by side when ill. Why on earth, then, should we not also live side by side?"* (Islington gentrifier, Mary Hall, in letter to The Times, 1977).

Many of the incoming middle classes in Barnsbury wanted to live in a socially mixed neighbourhood, but the result was class struggle. Why? Pitt (1977:16) provides an answer:

*"Social balance or 'mix' is an argument about the consequences of social class patterns. It rests on the belief that there is an ideal composition of social and income groups which, when achieved, produces optimum individual and community well-being. The assumed social advantages of the balanced community have been at the heart of nearly all debate on new towns and urban renewal...The difficulty with the concept is that, despite numerous empirical investigations, very little is known about the advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of mix, nor at what level - street, neighbourhood, district, community - social balance would be a worthwhile goal for policy objectives. Most attempts to link the presence of certain socio-economic classes with the occurrence of various social problems or standards of public service have been inconclusive".*

Class struggle in Barnsbury was further complicated by the input of the different political parties, for example:

*"Milner Square was regarded as a test case of the Islington Labour Party's 1971 election pledge to take firm action to stop the process of middle class colonization in Barnsbury" (Islington Gazette, 1.5.73).*

The Council became interested in Milner Square in the Spring of 1971 when the owners of forty six houses submitted plans for the conversion and improvement of their homes. The Council rejected their plans because it would have meant the rehousing of 174 families. The Council instead decided to buy the forty six houses and renovate them themselves providing a variety of 1-4 bed roomed homes. The local reaction was so strong that even the political parties themselves were shocked at the emotion stirred up, for example, George Cunningham, Labour M.P. after meeting a local pressure group said, "I have never in my life experienced such bitter class hatred" (Hall, 1972).

In the war against the property speculators, an ironic story emerged which revealed the hypocrisies surrounding the motives of politicians in Barnsbury at this time. Councillor Margaret Watson chairwoman of the Housing Committee in the mid-1970s, put her Barnsbury house on the market for £28,000, 8 years after paying £8,000 for it, and 6 years after receiving a council improvement grant of £1,000. The irony of the story is that in order to get elected as a councillor she had campaigned against the evils of property speculation and the abuses of government improvement grants (Islington Gazette, 4.6.76). This story illustrates how politics and self interest associated with the gentrification process did not mix.

In Chapter 6.3, I illustrate the political outcomes of the class struggle in Barnsbury through an investigation into the politicization of interest groups in the area,



particularly in terms of the Barnsbury Traffic Scheme. But now I want to turn to class differentials and class struggle in Park Slope.

Sleeper elicits the class based nature of gentrification in Park Slope,

*"gentrification battles bring 'society' face to face with the hideous class differences it has created. Even as it recoils from them, it winds up entrenching itself behind them and in effect ratifying them"* (1982a:169).

Like in Barnsbury there were obvious class differentials in Park Slope. Sol Yurick a second generation New York developer (1972) recalls his arrival as a pioneer gentrifier in Park Slope:

*"As an early barbarian I felt the hostile stares of the aborigines, retired old men and women living in their rooming houses, moving slowly, suspiciously along the streets, buying cautiously in Bohack's. No one nods pleasantly to you or them".*

The gentrifiers were viewed with suspicion, and in a very short time, the class differences led to class struggle. Like in Barnsbury class struggle has been both active and a war of words. Consider the following exchange of verbage in letters to the Civic News. Sleeper (1982a:174) condemns the gentrification of Park Slope:

*"Marx called it commodity fetishism - an obsession with consumption styles that insinuates itself into personality when all human relationships have been plunged into the icy waters of calculation by market forces: the trappings of dignity that money can buy, such as brownstone ownership in an elegant neighbourhood, become virtually the only substitutes for the dignity of life in more stable, supportive communities".*

A gentrifier in Park Slope, Lew Smith, retaliates:

*"Many of the houses being renovated in my area have been vacant for a year or over. Most of the vacant buildings were torched and the people in them had to move out. But that was not the fault of the landlord, but mostly either the tenants or the junkies that are a way of life in the Down Slope. It's nothing to look out your window and see someone OD in the park across the street. But Mr. Sleeper doesn't deal with that side of the story...[Sleeper talks about class differences, he says blacks and*

*hispanics are being displaced, but]...come down this way, sir, and see how many of the minorities are buying houses and renting to minorities" (Brennan, 1982b:9-10).*

Clements (1988:25,38-39) argues that the trouble with gentrification in Park Slope is that it precipitates the collision of two of America's favourite myths: the melting pot and the pioneer,

*"the so called new gentry, will never melt in any pot that we know of, for the clash of sensibilities in this instance is not a question of ethnicity but of class" (Clements, 1988:25,38-39).*

Like in Barnsbury class struggle in Park Slope was complicated by numerous demarcations, it was not as simple as a two-class model of local versus gentrifier. An example of one conflict in the area illustrates this. In 1982 the Park Slope Improvement Committee got Mayor Ed Koch to go on a protest march against drug trafficking on 5th Avenue and prostitution on Pacific Street. The South Brooklyn Action Movement (an anti-gentrification organization) counter demonstrated with members of the Monacada Library (also an anti-gentrification group) and also the Fifth Avenue Committee (a pro-rehabilitation but anti-displacement group). Where the Park Slope Improvement Committee was chanting "Down With Drugs", the counter demonstrators were chanting "Koch Kapitalist Tool". Monacada Library posted tracts on lampposts arguing that the Park Slope Improvement Committee and the Mayor were,

*"actively assisting the CIA to bring drugs into this country to turn minority people into addicts in order to oppress 3rd World peoples" (Brennan, 1982a:4).*

Due to the demonstration the Fifth Avenue Committee which was pro-rehabilitation, became linked to left radicals. The Fifth Avenue Committee argued:

*"There are few options for improving the quality of life in the neighborhood beyond bringing in Capital...But the question remains for whom. We want to attract Capital into the area, but we don't want to be washed out with it" - Fran Justa, former President of the Fifth Avenue Committee" (DeRocker, 1981b:6,7,22).*

At a public meeting on housing issues the pro-gentrification groups said that the Fifth Avenue Committee wanted to use housing as a policy of social control, and that social engineering was against the idea of freedom in the United States. The pro-gentrification groups argued:

*"The single most victimizing landlord in Park Slope is the City of New York, which owns more than 200 properties in the Slope and will not sell them due to the opposing efforts of Fifth Avenue Committee" (Brennan, 1982a:7).*

The Fifth Avenue Committee appeared to be wrestling with dilemmas. Frederick Baarm of Park Slope Improvement Committee, in a letter to a Brooklyn Weekly, referring to the Fifth Avenue Committee's subsidized homeownership proposal, said:

*"They are trying to develop an empire of buildings and public funds that will enable them to pursue the socialist propaganda that will encourage hatred and economic depression".*

Sleeper (1982b:174) comments on the relationship between pro-gentrification groups and pro-rehabilitation groups such as the Fifth Avenue Committee:

*"Middle class people who work with low income residents to cushion market displacement become targets of special rage. They threaten the zealots, because they uphold the possibility of an economy and a society in which the zealots' desperate scramble might not have to be made, in which the extremes of heroic escape from the gutter and pathetic immersion in it would dissolve".*

In conclusion, when asked whether the middle and working classes live amicably, one realtor answered:

*"Very well - they're not necessarily going to be next door to each other, but they're going to be sharing the same school zones, the same shopping"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

This statement supports Pitt's (1977:16) argument over social mix and gentrification in Barnsbury, in that it is inconclusive. For the realtor states that the two classes do not necessarily live next to each other.

Class differentials and class struggle have been a potent part of the gentrification process in both Barnsbury and Park Slope. But the analysis of class in relation to gentrification is more complex than locals versus gentrifiers or pro-gentrification groups versus anti-gentrification groups. With this in mind I now turn to the postmodernist framework where these kinds of complexities will be addressed.

## **CHAPTER 6 A COMPARISON OF GENTRIFICATION IN LONDON AND NEW YORK THROUGH A POSTMODERNIST FRAMEWORK**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I work through a comparison of gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope in terms of ideas of postmodernity from the gentrification literature, as set out in the postmodernist framework in Chapter 3.3. The chapter has been divided into five sections: periodization: modernity to postmodernity, the politicization of interest groups, the arrival of the new middle class, commodification and marketing strategies, and local narratives. These sections illustrate an analysis of gentrification which is concerned with discussing postmodernity as both an object and an attitude, in terms of the relationship between economic and cultural explanation. The central focus is culture, lifestyle and the new middle class in postmodernity.

### **6.2 Periodization: Modernity to Postmodernity**

In economic and cultural terms the transition from modernity to postmodernity was important for the gentrification process in both London and New York. The transition links to the development of London and New York as world or global cities. This transition formed a background of urban economic change relevant to the suburbanization process, the decline of the inner-city and the revitalization of the inner-city as illustrated in Chapter 5. The move to post-industrialism provided a pool of service jobs in inner-city London and New York, many of the workers who took up these positions located in gentrified areas such as Barnsbury and Park Slope within

easy commuting distance to central business districts. Many of the blue collar workers decentralized with the decline of inner-city manufacturing and the related processes described in Chapter 5.

London moved from being a decentralized manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based financial and business service economy (see Table 6.1). The Big Bang represented a culmination of the shift towards services and the central focus of London's economy shifted with it (Budd, 1992:277).

**Table 6.1 Annual Sectoral Change in Employment in the London Region**

| Years   | Manufacturing | Services | Total   |
|---------|---------------|----------|---------|
| 1951-61 | +400          | +18,700  | +1700   |
| 1961-66 | -30,700       | -11,700  | -14,300 |
| 1971-74 | -49,200       | +5,400   | -30,800 |
| 1981-84 | -32,300       | +5,400   | -33,900 |
| 1985-89 | -400          | +51,000  | +36,000 |

Source: Budd, 1992:277, Table 11.4, statistics from Buck et al., 1986; Bank of England, 1989.

But the number of service jobs in London did not increase as substantially as it appears, it is because of overall job losses in London since the 1960s that service jobs number so high today (Hamnett, 1990:27).

London developed from a declining imperial capital to a global city within a relatively short period of time. In the mid-1960s London employed 20 per cent of the manufacturing workers of England and Wales. There were a number of manufacturing belts. The Victorian belt in inner London included Islington and



employed a third of the industrial labour force of Greater London. Geographically it was subdivided into specialized quarters; the Clerkenwell zone of engineering, metal and instrument manufacturing spread north and north-west into Kings Cross, Barnsbury, Holloway and Camden Town. There was a riverside belt associated with the docks, a west London belt which developed between the two world wars, and the Lee Valley manufacturing belt in north-east London. In the 1950s and 1960s due to decentralization an outer manufacturing belt emerged. In 1961 Greater London had a manufacturing employment level of 1,613,000, by 1973 this had dropped to less than 1,000,000 and by 1983 it had dropped again to just over 500,000 (Wood, 1978:38; Humphries and Taylor, 1986:21).

There were differential rates of decline across London (Table 6.2). Inner London had the largest employment loss, 12.6 per cent from 1966-1971, and a large percentage change in the labour force 13.5 per cent in the same period. Inner London's manufacturing declined due to decreased demand, but was made worse by the oil crisis and the world economic recession of the early 1970s, the small firms died first, many moved to the more spacious sites out of the city.

**Table 6.2 Percentage Employment Change in London by Area 1966-71**

| Area                 | % Employment<br>Change 1966-71 | % Labour Force<br>Change 1966-71 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Conurbation Centre   | -4.2                           | -13.7                            |
| Rest of Inner London | -12.6                          | -13.5                            |
| Outer London         | -1.9                           | -4.1                             |
| Greater London       | -5.6                           | -8.2                             |

Source: Wood, 1978:46.

Moreover, a property boom in London meant that companies could profit by asset stripping their factory sites, which were then developed for offices and warehouses. Due to the international division of labour multinationals like Ford, Hoover and Kodak moved to other countries, especially the continent. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s multinational withdrawal lost London approximately 100,000 jobs (Humphries and Taylor, 1986:22-24). The demise of employment in Docklands had a significant impact on the decline of the manufacturing employment in London. The closure of St. Katherine, the London and Surrey Docks between 1967-1970 decreased Dockland employment by half, and later as the Royal Docks were closed down dock employment practically disappeared (King, 1990).

Manufacturing has declined steadily in London since 1971, the peak of the decline was 1981-1984 (Table 6.3). Financial and producer services increased most significantly in the years 1984-1987. Manufacturing was less able to compete in national and international markets from sites in inner London, it had to locate to the south-east and outer metropolitan area. The manufacturing losses in London have been greater than those in Britain as a whole; where Britain lost 25% of its manufacturing employment 1971-1981, inner London lost 41% and Greater London lost 36%. Counting all non-industrial employment, the service sector produced 81% of employment in London by 1981. Indeed London's increases in the service sector especially in finance and business have been 5-10% higher than increases in other British cities except for Edinburgh (King, 1990).

**Table 6.3 Employment Change in London Region 1971-1989 by Type (% change p.a.)**

| Years   | Manufacturing | Other Production Industries | Transport & Wholesale Distribution |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1971-78 | -2.69         | -1.26                       | -0.70                              |
| 1978-81 | -3.75         | -0.77                       | -0.15                              |
| 1981-84 | -4.03         | -2.53                       | -0.54                              |
| 1984-87 | -3.65         | -0.97                       | -1.30                              |
| 1987-89 | -2.60         | -5.00                       | +0.70                              |

| Years   | Financial & Producer Services | Private Consumer Services | Public Services |
|---------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1971-78 | +1.90                         | +1.08                     | +1.66           |
| 1978-81 | +2.12                         | +0.68                     | -1.34           |
| 1981-84 | +4.89                         | +2.72                     | -0.19           |
| 1984-87 | +6.54                         | +1.99                     | +1.13           |
| 1987-89 | +4.55                         | +2.30                     | -0.20           |

Source: Buck et al., 1992:84-85:Table 3.5.

Between 1971-1976 (during some of the peak years of gentrification in Barnsbury) Greater London manufacturing declined by 16%, and Islington's manufacturing by 23-28%. Islington lost over 34,000 manufacturing jobs 1951-1971, over half of these were lost between 1966-1971; during 1971-1976 another 10,000-12,000 jobs were lost (Islington Economy Group, 1979:22-24). In Islington the clothing, furniture and precision metal factories closed down one by one, as such unemployment increased in Islington from 500 people in 1954 to 3,000 in 1974 and 17,000 people in 1982 (Humphries and Taylor, 1986:166). From 1971-1975 the clothing industry in Islington lost 2,200 jobs, paper/printing and publishing lost 3,600 jobs and timber/furniture 800 jobs (Islington Economy Group, 1979:25). Having important associations for the gentrification process, there was a decline in the need for unskilled labour around the Barnsbury area because of the re-siting of Covent

Garden, the decline of London Docks and the rationalization of Kings Cross goods yard, yet there was a corresponding increase in the need for professional and service labour due to for example, the growth of New City University and the expansion of Northern Polytechnic (Pring, 1968/1069:20). In Barnsbury the rehabilitation of the old Agricultural Hall into a Business Design Centre symbolizes the change from manufacturing to services, modernity to postmodernity (Plate 6.1).

Some of the largest firms in Europe closed down firms in Islington due to out of date plants, increased mechanization and relocation to new capital intensive factories. Islington was especially affected because of its small scale and out of date industrial plants. In 1975 Glaxo closed Eschmann Brothers and Walsh in Islington, Glaxo moved them to a new factory in Sheffield and opened up subsidiaries abroad in Chile. Nova (Jersey) Knit moved its Islington textile plant in 1973 during a world slump in the demand for textiles, 130 employees were laid off. The company moved to South Wales claiming £432,000 in operational grants, and a loan of £450,000 from the Ministry of Technology and £396,000 in other grants. Nova also rented out its Islington factory, revealing the increasing property values in this part of London. The new Nova investment cost £1.5 million including land, factory, machines and everything, had they remained in Islington the land they would have needed to buy alone would have cost £2.5 million (Islington Economy Group, 1979).

Some have blamed Islington Borough Council's municipalization policy for industrial decline in the area, for example, between 1966-1977, 164,212 square metres of

industrial floor space was acquired for public housing by Islington Borough Council. Also the private property sector took 249,500 square metres of industrial land and left it vacant, thus influencing industrial decline in the area (Islington Economy Group, 1979:28). The gentrification of the Dove Brothers factory in Barnsbury (Plate 6.2) symbolizes the transition from industrial modernity to residential postmodernity.

As London entered postmodernity, the whole ethos of the city changed, "London once the workshop of the world, was rapidly becoming the world's playground" (Humphries and Taylor, 1986:24). Tourism became the fastest growing industry, by the mid-1980s one in ten jobs were associated with tourism. Yet, despite economic growth in the 1980s, unemployment, the sweated trades and homelessness were increasing. In 1988, as in New York, London had the highest house prices and the highest levels of homelessness, inequality was increasing with each year (Massey, 1988:15).

London began to develop its own postmodern spectacle in the 1960s; spontaneity, style and individualism reacted against the conservatism of an older generation; skyscrapers were constructed and reconstruction was the name of the game. In 1964 the new Labour government wanted to put the brakes on large scale office development in Greater London, it was known as the "Brown Ban" (after the Labour Minister George Brown). Initially there was an outright ban, then later office permits were strictly controlled instead. In the 1970s with a new Tory government many of the Labour government controls were abolished and another property boom followed

(Humphries and Taylor, 1986:62-75). This is how Zukin (1992a:199) describes London as a postmodern city:

*"The Docklands Light Railway connects the City's stern office buildings with the brighter, more reflective steel-and-glass or restored commercial centres at Canary Warf, Tobbacco Dock and the Royal Albert Dock, two miles away...Docks that have not yet been demolished or redeveloped are stark monuments to Victorian industry: huge, empty, lacking a function in the eight-square-mile, purpose-built financial quarter around them, where Canary Wharf alone occupies 71 acres".*

Here we have a dichotomized image, that of London in the era of modernity and in the era of postmodernity. The spectacle in London is a futuristic "gaze", as an official of the London Docklands Development Corporation stated:

*"We have turned this area around...We have changed the perception of it from the backyard of London to a city of the future"* (from The New York Times, 15 October 1988, cited by Zukin, 1992a:201).

But the psychological image formed by the spectacle in London has positive and negative aspects:

*"the City became imprinted on the national culture as an exemplar of a new Britain which was more conscious of wealth and more careless of egalitarian concerns. The rapidly growing cultural industries were able to serve up the City to audiences as a set of stereotypes. For example, young men and women working in the City were interpreted as Thatcher's stormtroopers..."* (Thrift and Leyshon, 1992:283).

As a result, in the mid-1980s there were backlashes against these spectacles of wealth, for example, the street based organization "Class War" set about vandalizing expensive cars and houses in Docklands in reaction to yuppification in the area.

Now I want to turn to New York City, Brooklyn and Park Slope, and tell the story of the transition from modernity to postmodernity, to assess how different the processes of change were across the Atlantic.



Table 6.4 illustrates New York's transition from an industrial city to a post-industrial city. Manufacturing has declined considerably and the service industry has increased substantially, construction has gone through periods of boom and crisis and F.I.R.E. has expanded slowly. Yet if we look at F.I.R.E.'s pattern on an annual basis, it peaked in 1987, and has been in decline since then. Banking and securities jobs were part of this decline as the financial sector retrenched.

Like in London, New York City lost manufacturing jobs because the manufacturing industry could not compete in national and international markets from sites central to New York City, they had to relocate. But *Fortune* (February 1990) considers the decline of manufacturing in New York City to be ironic because manufacturing has moved out of the city less because New York is in decline, more because bankers, brokers, lawyers and service firms have bid up downtown office rents (Hamilton, 1991:65). There was a significant relocation to the sunbelt states.

**Table 6.4 New York City Employment by Specific Industry 1969-1990**

| Year | Total  | Construction | Manufacturing | F.I.R.E. | Services |
|------|--------|--------------|---------------|----------|----------|
| 1969 | 3796.2 | 104.5        | 825.8         | 464.2    | 781.8    |
| 1974 | 3446.1 | 101.8        | 602.1         | 425.2    | 785.6    |
| 1979 | 3278.7 | 70.9         | 518.5         | 429.7    | 859.8    |
| 1984 | 3434.9 | 94.5         | 429.6         | 500.5    | 1007.2   |
| 1990 | 3569.9 | 112.9        | 337.5         | 516.9    | 1163.6   |

Source: New York State Department of Labor.

Note: The totals also include Transportation, Communications, & Public Utilities, the Wholesale & Retail Trade and Government.

F.I.R.E. = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

Brooklyn is

*"the tail of New York City's economy...just as New York City is the tail of the U.S. economy"* (Weinberg cited in Cantwell, 1980a:3:2:48).

Brooklyn in the shadow of Manhattan followed a similar pattern of change. Brooklyn's downtown began to develop whilst its neighbourhood businesses expanded. Government offices, banks and real estate offices, emerged around Borough hall, and retail stores grew along Fulton Street. Brooklyn's skyscraper period was the 1920s and culminated with the construction of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower (now a distinguishing landmark for Brooklyn's central business district [Plate 6.3]). Even during this skyscraper stage in Brooklyn's development, Manhattan's function as the head quarter of corporations and finance, and the office centre of the New York region, meant that Brooklyn was unable to challenge its dominance and no more skyscrapers were built (Ment, 1979:80). But neighbourhoods and local services continued to be of great importance in the area. Manufacturing in Brooklyn grew into the 1950s and peaked in 1954 at 235,000 jobs, it changed little until the late 1960s when it began to decline, by 1972 there were 165,000 manufacturing jobs and by 1976 only 112,000 jobs (Ment, 1979:91). The following two case studies reveal some of the factors responsible for the move away from manufacturing in Brooklyn.

Firstly, the brewing industry left Brooklyn. Lager was first sucessfully brewed in the United States in 1840, by 1850 Brooklyn had six breweries. In 1855 Brooklyn annexed Williamsburgh and Bushwick, there were a lot of Germans in these areas known as "Little Germanys". By 1898 there were 45 breweries, for example,

Edelbrew, The Eastern Brewing Company, and, The New York and Brooklyn Brewing Company. The peak year for production was 1907 - 2,500,000 barrels were produced, then in 1920 the "National Prohibition Act" forbade the "manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States". Any drink which had more than half a percent alcohol by volume was considered to be intoxicating liquor (Anderson and Desena, 1979:125-136). In 1933 prohibition ended. In the 1940s production soared again as brewing nationally became increasingly concentrated into a small number of larger corporations i.e. Anheuser-Busch, Schlitz, Pabst and Miller; this led to the closure of the older breweries in Brooklyn, these were replaced by a limited number of larger modern facilities elsewhere. The new breweries could offer economies of scale and frequently benefitted from lower costs for taxes, water and electricity. Modern refrigerated transportation and the non-returnable throw away can and bottle liberated the new breweries from a production location next to their market. Federal tax policies giving tax credits for new capital investment provided another incentive to move (Ment, 1979:91-92). In 1950 Brooklyn had only seven breweries, 1966-1976 saw the remaining breweries close down.

Secondly, the case of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, whose importance to the Brooklyn economy was incalculable. During 1865 to 1898 there was a lot of growth of dock and warehouse facilities in Brooklyn because Manhattan had become congested and an expensive place to do business. Manhattan attracted manufacturers and shippers of valuable goods and businesses that had to be close to other businesses, whilst facilities

for the shipping of bulky goods and manufacturing operations that required a lot of space were located in Brooklyn (Ment, 1979). In existence since 1812 and dominating the Brooklyn manufacturing scene in the Second World War, the yard was still manufacturing warships in the 1960s. Its number of employees peaked at times of national emergency, for example, at the end of the Second World War it employed 71,000 people. The Navy Yard became a victim of Defense Department cutbacks and closed in 1966, at the time it was the largest industrial complex in Brooklyn County (Palisi, 1979:119-124). The work went to Virginia, Louisiana and Mississippi, an illustration of Federal Defense Procurement Policies which favoured regions outside the north-east. Many jobs were lost due to containerization which instead developed in New Jersey, in the swamps in Port Newark and Port Elizabeth. Brooklyn retained only the "break of bulk" shipping and the remains of the container shipping. Yet the case of the Brooklyn Navy Yard also shows the positive action taken by local authorities to try to preserve manufacturing jobs. In 1969 the City of New York took over the navy yard from the defense department and leased it out to the Commerce Labor Industry Corporation of Kings (C.L.I.C.K.) to be used as an industrial park. By 1978, 38 firms with 6,000 workers had taken the location, some of the companies were engaged in ship construction and repair (Ment, 1979:92).

Manufacturing in Brooklyn as a whole continued to decline, by 38,500 jobs from 1977 to 1985, service jobs increased in the same period by 33,700 (Municipal Research Institute, 1986:17). From 1965 to 1979 every fiscal quarter showed a decline in private sector non-government jobs in Brooklyn, there was a slight increase

in 1979 but this then bottomed out. Whilst Manhattan gained 178,300 new jobs 1977-1984, Brooklyn actually lost 6,100 jobs, but since the mid-1980s Brooklyn's manufacturing, retail and service industries have expanded (Municipal Research Institute, 1984:37). Brooklyn has the largest manufacturing share of all the New York boroughs, in 1984 1 in 4 of its jobs were still in manufacturing. Brooklyn moved more slowly than New York City as a whole into post-industrialism, primarily because its job base was more blue collar in nature. The most spectacular development in Brooklyn has been in the Health and Social Services sector and not in the business services sector. Indeed, finance, insurance and real estate actually lost 4,400 jobs from 1977-1984, a reflection of the contraction of its local savings banks and the bankruptcy of a major local insurance company head quarter in downtown Brooklyn (Municipal Research Institute, 1984:38).

Park Slope became a mirror for the transition to post-industrialism seen in New York and Brooklyn, i.e. its blue collar employment declined, although not as rapidly because much of this was small scale operations. In the late C19th an attorney Edward Litchfield, who lived in Park Slope off Prospect Park, initiated a variety of industrial expansions around the Gowanus canal area, i.e. chemicals, metallurgical works, lumber and coal (see Justa, 1984). Blue collar housing was constructed amongst the industry. Yet the upper sections of the Slope were being appropriated for upper income residential use, and the construction of Prospect Park (designed by the architects of Central Park) was an attempt to attract upper class Manhattanites. The Gowanus Canal industrial area south of Park Slope declined with 35 per cent of its

jobs being lost between 1969 and 1982 (New York City Department of City Planning, 85-09, October 1985). In the 1970s in Park Slope there were losses in blue collar employment and a limited growth in white collar employment predominantly in professional/managerial positions. The income gap between blue and white collar workers was 40 per cent by the mid-1970s (Justa, 1984). Accompanied by gentrification actual service employment increased in Park Slope, for example, retail, realtors and insurance. Fieldwork undertaken by myself in 1992 revealed approximately 30 realtors<sup>45</sup> operating in the Park Slope area. Fieldwork by O'Hanlon (1982) undertaken in 1978 discovered only 21 realtors operating in the area.

So far I have looked at the economic transition to postmodernity in New York, but the transition also had a social, psychological and cultural dimension. The Bicentennial celebration in July 1976 is one such example, "with its magical parade of tall ships", and the following "exuberant" Democratic National Convention which "lifted the spirits of New Yorkers" (Scanlon, 1989:84). Other spectacles, other landscapes of power symbolized the transition to postmodernity. The 1980s saw the construction of "Battery Park City", a commercial and residential development placed on a landfill site on the Hudson River, where "speculative builders and public authorities favoured a civilized postmodern style" (Zukin, 1992a:198):

*"Battery Park City's logo is Gateway Tower, a symbolic entry to the old financial district that lies behind the new World Financial Center...public art with expensive corporate and commercial architecture helped writers visualise Battery Park City as a grand, romantic, yet accessible urban landscape in the tradition of Venice, St Petersburg and Constantinople" (Zukin, 1992a:201).*

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<sup>45</sup> There were "approximately" 30 realtors because some of them were shutting down and some were opening up.



Zukin also mentions "South Street Seaport", at one time a fish market and docking area; now with historic status it includes party boats, shops, food malls, museums, bars and restaurants, it also acts as a tourist attraction.

In summary, the transition from modernity to postmodernity economically and culturally has been similar in both London and New York. Economically manufacturing has declined and the financial and service industries have grown. Culturally new postmodern cityscapes have been constructed. Minor contextualisms are apparent, for example, government economic policies, but in general the transition has been similar in both cities. The transition from modernity to postmodernity is also noticeable in other spheres, it is to these I now turn.

### **6.3 The Politicization of interest groups**

People reacted to the changes associated with the transition to postmodernity, for example, groups in Barnsbury and Park Slope became politicized around the issue of gentrification. In this section I compare the politicization of interest groups in both these neighbourhoods.

In Britain,

*"The 1950s had been a decade of material progress but spiritual apathy. It took a crisis on the scale of Suez or the Bomb to provoke ordinary people into going on protest marches, and few people kicked against the existing system. The country was still divided into a passive Us and an active Them...Left to their own devices, it is doubtful whether any tenants would have risen up against their landlords, but the politically motivated 1960s were approaching" (Green, 1979:128).*

In Barnsbury two sets of residents became political as gentrification changed the nature of the neighbourhood. These two groups were not divided on purely class lines, but class differences were important. These class differences were broadly between the existing locals and the middle class incomers. Both of these groups of people had strong feelings about each others existence. For example, the view of the local:

*"People in the street didn't resent the new owners who moved into the houses Redspring managed to empty. What they did resent was that they wanted to change the area we live in, tear up roads, put down cobbles, etc. People objected to outsiders coming in, making changes, and then making existing residents pay for them on the rates. They were the aggressors"* (Ray Spreadbury, Chairman of Stonefield Street Tenants Association, in Pitt, 1977:1).

And the view of the incomer:

*"The present trend towards a rising proportion of the middle classes in the population will continue. This will help create a better social balance in the structure of the community, and the professional expertise of the articulate few will ultimately benefit the underprivileged population"* (Ken Pring, Barnsbury pioneer gentrifier and architect, in Pitt, 1977:1).

At a basic level both groups of people had different visions of what Barnsbury should be like for them. In his 1969 report "Barnsbury Explored", Ken Pring (the above resident of Barnsbury) commented on "the apparent apathy of much of the underprivileged section of the community", yet by 1970 this section of the community had apparently overcome their apathy and reacted strongly, specifically to planning proposals for Barnsbury and the Barnsbury Traffic Scheme. The intervention of interest groups into the planning process in Barnsbury was to act as a blueprint for future participation in the planning process in Britain as a whole. Before the politicization of groups in Barnsbury, planning in Britain had tended,

*"to be conducted on the basis that the problems were self-evident and that the remedies would in general benefit the entire community. American observers of the British system have commented that this approach is typical of a paternalistic political system where the ruling class is sure of its values and has no compunction in imposing them on the rest of the community" (Ferris, 1972:16-17).*

The Barnsbury Association was formed in August 1964 in reaction to the then Labour controlled Islington Borough Council's housing policy in Barnsbury<sup>46</sup>.

Founder member Ken Pring said,

*"present membership of the Association is confined to young professional people who have bought old properties ripe for improvement. Many of them live outside Islington but plan to move after repair" (Islington Gazette, 11.8.64).*

Brenda Thomson another member of the Barnsbury Association, a year later, tried to dampen the idea that the Barnsbury Association was a group made up exclusively of the professional classes:

*"I would like to bury the myth that the Barnsbury Association is an exclusive social society of successful executives and highly paid professional men".*

Yet her class bias was reflected in the fact that she wanted

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<sup>46</sup> The positions of the different political parties with respect to the housing situation in Barnsbury in 1964 (Islington Gazette, 25.9.64) were as follows:

The conservatives advocated a policy of building and slum clearance, they wanted to remove the restrictions and red tape which were getting in the way of building houses, but more importantly they wanted to modernize old property which was sound.

The Liberals wanted to clear land for building: "We will provide legislation to protect tenants against unscrupulous landlords. But we will make sure that property does not fall to pieces because the landlord is not receiving enough rent to carry out repairs" (Eric Thwaites, Liberal candidate).

Labour wanted to repeal the 1957 Rent Act and restore security of tenure: "Under a Labour government, housing will be treated as a social service. Owner occupation will be encouraged but we must face the fact that homes to let at rents the average man can afford to pay can no longer be provided by private enterprise" (Gerry Reynolds, Labour candidate).

The Communist candidate, John Moss argued that housing needs were more important than private profit, he wanted Islington to become a Special Area for house and flat building, and like Labour wanted the 1957 Rent Act repealed and security of tenure reinstated.

to see:

*"Islington...a nicer place to live in and not a segregated working class dormitory"* (Islington Gazette, 2.7.65).

Ken Pring's class bias was reflected in his patronizing and condescending attitude as illustrated in his (1968/1969) conservation study of Barnsbury for the Barnsbury Association. In the study he advocates street cleaning in the area:

*"We feel that such a job could be done with pride and dignity, perhaps by a pensioned ex-service man, and that the cost to the residents could be ludicrously small. Assuming a wage of £10 per week and £5 for his flat and the cost to Lonsdale Square would be only one shilling and six pence per week per unit assuming 200 units in the square...The concierge would be on duty only part of the day and would be tipped for other jobs done for residents. More importantly, he could hold the key to the hinged bollards proposed for closed off areas and be on hand to open them when required".*

Indeed, the following reaction to James Pitt's publication "Gentrification in Islington", summarizes the guilt-ridden nature of the politics of the new middle class:

*"After reading it you may well conclude that what Barnsbury is really suffering from is a plague of guilt-ridden middle class people who have grabbed their place in the sun and are now determined to make damned sure that no one else follows their example"* (Islington Gazette, 19.8.77).

At this time Islington Borough Council's housing policy was similar to London County Council Policy; they were eradicating older housing to make way for new housing. The Barnsbury Association was essentially a pro-conservation group responding to the clearance of old houses, but they did not like to be labelled in this way, the conservation label was too political for them. The Barnsbury Association was led by David Wagner an architect and planner, who after studying Barnsbury concluded that Islington Borough Council's piecemeal plan for Barnsbury should be laid aside and a more holistic plan advocated. The Association formed to object to the

London County Council and Islington Borough Council plans for Bewdley Street and to put pressure on Islington Borough Council to consider an overall plan for Barnsbury:

*"Many seedy houses in the area would by now have been completely restored if owners and prospective purchasers had not been faced with the appalling possibility of their houses being acquired by the LCC for the purpose of demolition" (Ken Pring of the Barnsbury Association, Islington Gazette, 11.8.64).*

The houses on Bewdley Street were under Compulsory Purchase Order, they were to be redeveloped for new housing. Bewdley Street was in the middle of an area of gentrifiers. There was a public inquiry held in June 1965, the Barnsbury Association argued that the Greater London Council and Islington Borough Council proposals were piecemeal and the neighbourhood should be considered in its entirety as an environmental area. The Barnsbury Association produced a plan which suggested environmental improvements and the exclusion of traffic from the area. The Barnsbury Association fought their case through a member barrister - Ian MacDonald, he provided some expert witnesses and argued for "citizen participation" in the mode advocated by the Skeffington Report (Ferris, 1972:35). The Barnsbury Association had contacts in Whitehall and Fleet Street (Cowley et al., 1977:178). In December 1965 the compulsory purchase order was allowed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, but suggestions were voiced that the Greater London Council and Islington Borough Council cooperate with the Ministry in the creation of Barnsbury as an environmental area with a traffic scheme similar to that put forward by Buchanan in his "Traffic in Towns". The Minister also suggested a consultation with the Barnsbury Association. "The Barnsbury Environmental Study

Interim Report" was produced in August 1966 and circulated to the Barnsbury Association. In 1967 the Barnsbury Association attended a conference in the Department of Sociology at Southampton University, the theme being "The Citizens Contribution to Town Planning"; they provided an exhibition of their work called "Plans and People", and were interviewed on television.

Nairn (1968:21) introduced the idea of a "Mr. Barnsbury" who was responsible to both the Barnsbury residents and the Planning Committee, Mr. Barnsbury was ideally to be a planning assistant or an outside planner. The "Barnsbury Scandal" occurred when Islington Borough Council ignored the views of the Barnsbury Association in formulating the report, so the Barnsbury Association went to Anthony Greenwood, the new Minister of Housing. More explicitly it was alleged that officials of Islington Borough Council and the Greater London Council had truncated the report to delete criticism of themselves:

*"Every comment or proposal which directly or by implication would have called any existing council policy into question has been ruthlessly excised"* (North London Post, 3.3.67).

With better consultation between Islington Borough Council and the Barnsbury Association the second part of the study was displayed in April 1968 in a local school. But the Barnsbury Association complained that the display was only open for a limited amount of time, and that the Islington Borough Council planning team did not wish to hear the comments from Barnsbury residents. Indeed none of the planning experts in the exhibition asked "who Barnsbury was being improved for" (Cowley et



al., 1977:178). The final "Barnsbury Environmental Study Report" was produced in October 1968 and it concluded that:

*"Environmental planning is not merely a question of giving an area a 'facelift' or executing some piecemeal traffic management measures. It is a much wider and more complex process of redesigning and reshaping an area through a multitude of actions, some of them small, others more wide ranging, so that the whole area under study can serve more effectively people's everyday activities in safe and pleasant surroundings"* (London Borough of Islington, 1968:1).

The Barnsbury Association was annoyed at the absence of proper costings and requirements for implementation, so they employed a town planner/economist to undertake a cost benefit appraisal (see Horne, 1970). He showed that wholesale redevelopment in Barnsbury would be more expensive than gradual renewal. In February 1969 members of Islington's town planning committee met local organizers and civic society members in a "walk around study tour of Barnsbury". The discussion revolved around the notion of Barnsbury as a conservation area. Local feeling was represented by the Islington Society, the Angel Association, the Barnsbury Association, Thornhill Residents Association and Tufnell Park Residents Association (London Borough of Islington, 4.2.69).

Meanwhile, political manoeuvrings were afoot. In May 1968 three members of the Barnsbury Association entered the local elections as Independent candidates, they persuaded Conservative and Liberal members not to enter candidates and won the election. The Conservatives gained control of Islington Borough Council, the three Independents were to fight for the publication of the Barnsbury Environmental Report. In November 1968 the report was recognized by Islington Borough Council,

and in 1970 the experimental traffic scheme was agreed between Islington Borough Council and the Greater London Council. The Barnsbury Opinion Poll undertaken by the Greater London Council in December 1972 - January 1973, found that 30 per cent of Barnsbury's population thought that the environmental management/traffic scheme would have adverse effects and 29 per cent thought it would be beneficial. A committee was set up in July 1969 to decide how best to implement the Barnsbury Report, the three Independents were included in this team. Some improvements were already underway, tree planting throughout the area and the laying of granite sets to look like cobble stones in Cloudesley Road.

Various other groups emerged from the Barnsbury Association. After the first public enquiry Ian MacDonald formed the Housing Action Group within the Barnsbury Association but the group collapsed two years later for it was too left wing for the Barnsbury Association. Ian MacDonald resigned, but some members reformed under the name The Barnsbury Housing Association, this group went on to rehabilitate the houses on Bewdley Street.

The results of the activities of the Barnsbury Association and Barnsbury Housing Association were; a traffic scheme in the area which excluded traffic from certain streets, Barnsbury was designated a conservation area under the Civic Amenities Act, tree planting, cobble stones and street furniture were invested in within Barnsbury, council owned land was allocated to the Barnsbury Housing Association for them to renovate and provide housing for middle income groups such as teachers and social

workers; and, Bewdley Street was designated for improvement instead of redevelopment by the Greater London Council (Cowley et al., 1977:179).

In the mid-1970s the Barnsbury Housing Association founded a new housing estate on the south side of Lofting Road, which had been demolished in the 1960s, called Barnsbury Mews:

*"Housing associations occupy a curious, somewhat romantic position in English housing politics. They are on the one hand seen as a cooperative venture in the orthodox philosophy of socialist thought, and on the other hand a private enterprize method of utilizing humanitarian motives and charitable funds for the provision of dwellings for the poor"* (Blythe, 1974:11).

Barnsbury Mews contains 155 homes and 92 garages and was designed by Pring and Associates with traditional materials. A total of 75 per cent of the lettings were allocated to the Greater London Council and Islington Borough Council, the remains were Barnsbury Housing Association allocations (Britton, 1972). They wanted to attract the intermediary classes; teachers and local authority workers, for example, social workers, policemen and policewomen. Barnsbury Mews was described by the Royal Institute of British Architects (1981) as, "simply unostentatious, good quality housing design without any pandering to pseudo-vernacular now so popular". And in 1977 Barnsbury Mews received a good housing recommendation from the Department of the Environment, who stated that Barnsbury Mews was "possibly the most important housing development of the 1970s" (Cosh, 1981:25).

In March 1970 another grass roots organization was politicized. The Barnsbury Action Group was formed by locals and community workers,

*"to draw attention to what they regarded as the misallocation of resources on environmental 'tarting up' and also to get the traffic scheme rescinded" (Ferris, 1972:28).*

The catalyst for the formation of the Barnsbury Action Group was Friends Neighbourhood House, a local community project on Lonsdale Square which was set up in 1969 as a multi-racial community project committed to self-help projects in the area, and concerned about the demise of old community networks in the area. The Barnsbury Action Group disliked the traffic scheme because where some streets gained from the scheme, others were adversely affected. They disliked the restrictions imposed on their cars, some shop keepers were losing money and had problems with deliveries, traffic was now more concentrated on Liverpool Road and Offord Road, they disliked the transformation of Barnsbury into an urban village and wanted to prevent the further Chelsea-ization of the area (Ferris, 1972:47). The Barnsbury Action Group thought that "indoor sanitation should come before old English cobbles, and kitchens before wrought iron balconies" (Hay, 1972:17). Barnsbury Action Group stressed the plight of local residents in the area in terms of housing conditions, arguing that Islington Borough Council was ignoring these:

*"Essentially the Barnsbury Action Group case was that unless specific measures were taken to protect tenants any local authority sponsored environmental improvements could only act to reinforce existing market pressures on them; property prices would rise even more rapidly than they had been rising anyway. This in turn was suggested to lead to more cases of illegal harassment and other more subtle forms of coercion on tenants from landlords wishing to sell their property with vacant possession" (Ferris, 1972:28).*

In April 1970 the Barnsbury Action Group organized a petition with over 2,000 signatures which they presented to Islington Borough Council, and held a protest

march outside the Town Hall. They then stimulated media interest from the local and national newspapers and television - BBC and ITV. With no great success the Barnsbury Action Group then petitioned the Greater London Council instead of Islington Borough Council, but the Greater London Council would accept no responsibility. In November 1970 they held a meeting of approximately 200 people from throughout the community, their slogan was: "Who is Barnsbury being Improved For?". In the Winter of 1971 Barnsbury Action Group and the South West Islington Tenants Association<sup>47</sup> stimulated political support from the local Labour Party, although no definite agreement was reached on the traffic scheme, they agreed on housing issues.

In May 1971 Islington Borough Council was overturned by Labour, they won every seat in a very high turn out for an Islington election. The Barnsbury Action Group felt that the Barnsbury Association was influencing decision making well out of proportion to its size, they associated the Barnsbury Association with property speculators. Some members of Barnsbury Action Group disliked the Barnsbury Association idea of Barnsbury as a self contained village, they feared a middle class ghetto (Ferris, 1972:44). The Barnsbury Action Group managed to reduce the extent of the traffic scheme and drew attention to the effects of improvement on the local Barnsbury community (Cowley et al., 1977:180).

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<sup>47</sup> SWITA's members were those of the BAG who wanted to concentrate their efforts on housing issues, they disappeared after a year.

Ferris (1972:41) concludes that had the working class population in Barnsbury participated at the same level as the Barnsbury Association the traffic scheme may have been quite different. But,

*"The middle class pressure group, which usually trades under such apparently neutral titles such as 'residents groups' or 'community associations', have the time, the confidence and command of language to persuade planners to consider options which the working class population might think irrelevant or wrong" (Pitt, 1977:17).*

Moreover, the Barnsbury Association saw the Barnsbury Action Group as being unrepresentative of local feeling, there were too many shopkeepers and they felt that Friends Neighbourhood House which the group were associated with was supposed to foster community relations not tension (Ferris, 1972:50). Ferris (1972:85) characterizes the action of the Barnsbury Association as positive and aggressive, and the action of the Barnsbury Action Group as negative and defensive. The Barnsbury Action Group was not seen as a success because its most active members were from the middle classes - owner occupiers and shopkeepers, therefore the notion of local/community self help was invalidated (Cowley et al., 1977:180). Cowley et al. (1977) argue that economic and social change was too advanced at the time for the Barnsbury Action Group and SWITA to have much affect, and that more militant tactics would just have proved more frustrating for the groups. Their politicization and pressure had needed to begin 2-3 years earlier. Other factors were also important in the relative lack of success of the opposition groups, for example, SWITA had problems because the tenants it represented had a wide variety of legal rights, according to tenure type, as such there was no common cohesion.



One may ask why traffic and housing were interrelated themes in the politicization of interest groups in Barnsbury? Cowley et al. (1977:43) provide an answer;

*"...the expansion of public consumption also gives rise to a second fundamental contradiction; namely that between the individual way of appropriating higher living standards ('doing your own thing') and the objectively collective way of managing this process. To the extent that urban organisation forms a whole IT IS UNTHINKABLE TO SEPARATE HOUSING PROBLEMS FROM THOSE OF TRANSPORT [my emphasis], and these two form the creation, even in abstract, of new urban complexes".*

Since 1970 Barnsbury was the,

*"scene of the biggest experiment in London, and probably in all of Britain, in the new art of environmental management: an art which uses the devices of traffic management, not to speed the flow of traffic at the expense of the quality of urban life, but specifically to protect that quality" (Hall, 1972).*

Following the Buchanan Report, the Barnsbury Traffic Scheme sealed off the designated environmental area with gates and bollards (Plate 6.4); there remained one through route, but it was indirect, so only local drivers would know the way. Essentially it prevented and still prevents "commuter rat runs" emerging throughout Barnsbury.

In Park Slope the interest groups associated with the gentrification process were both more numerous and more varied. Also many of the groups are still active as will become apparent from my discussion. The groups can be ordered hierarchically according to their degree of political clout, from the Park Slope Civic Council down to the various block associations.

Indeed without private initiative and the need to make this initiative politically legitimate and/or vocal Park Slope may not have gentrified. The groups in Park Slope emerged against a background of interest in urban renewal in Brooklyn. In the late 1960s Brooklyn was designated as an urban renewal area like many areas in the United States, as urban social problems became political issues.

One of the first pro-gentrification groups to emerge in Park Slope was The Park Slope Betterment Committee formed in 1966 by like minded people to promote the positive aspects of their community. The founder was Everett Ortner who had moved from Brooklyn Heights to Park Slope in 1963:

*"I realized that unless other people learned an appreciation for the community and began moving in, the area would eventually die".*

Their sole ambition was to "drum up business" and recruit others to establish Park Slope as a solid and vital community (Milkowski, 1981). Initially each member pledged \$250, the money went towards putting up binders for the purchase of houses that the committee thought would interest young couples and for advertizing the virtues of the neighbourhood. The group investigated houses and then passed on names to real estate brokers. They were advised by two architects and several contractors. They assessed the values of houses, giving the prospective buyers advice on the best use of them. An example of their activities: A four-storey brownstone on 6th Avenue came up for sale. Joseph Ferris then president of the Park Slope Betterment Committee immediately placed a binder on the house and called two friends; Everett Ortner, a magazine editor and Robert Weiss a publishing executive,

they called several friends and the house was bought for \$18,000 by friends of Weiss (Monaghan, 1966). They sent brochures to Brooklyn Heights, Greenwich Village and the West Side in Manhattan, obviously having a particular set of people in mind for their neighbourhood. They began to organize house tours of the Slope which were usually associated with a theme. The members of Park Slope Betterment Committee stressed that they wanted Park Slope to remain an integrated neighbourhood, for another aim of the organization was to encourage black families.

As the Park Slope Betterment Committee became more vocal the Park Slope Civic Council began to encourage them, the latter is a non-profit organization which grew out of the South Brooklyn Board of Trade. Founded in 1896, the council is concerned with civic issues in the area. In the early 1960s the Park Slope Civic Council was concerned with the increasing blight in the area,

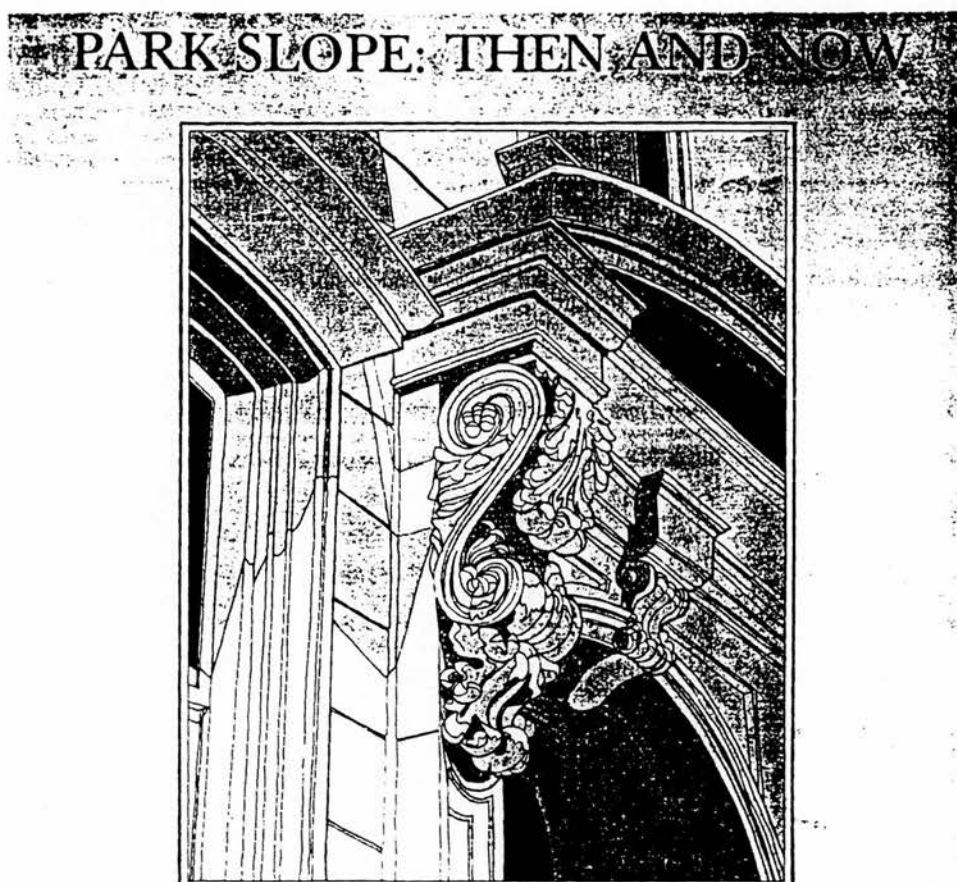
*"action must be taken before the cancer spreads beyond remedy"* (Civic News, 1960:23:10:1,4,6).

The Civic Council publishes a monthly newsletter (first published in 1938) and hosts the annual Park Slope House Tour, the first being in 1959. In 1991 it was the 32nd annual house tour and the theme was "Park Slope: Then and Now" (Figure 6.1). The House Tour<sup>48</sup> is an especially American way of attracting publicity, its aim is to attract people who they think would want to live in Park Slope. It is essentially a form

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<sup>48</sup> Counter House Tours occurred in other brownstone areas in New York, but not in Park Slope. These counter tours focused on the blighted houses in the area (see Kasinitz, 1988:173-174).

Figure 6.1 Park Slope House Tour 1991



32nd Annual House Tour  
Sunday, May 19, 1991 Noon to 5 P.M.

Advance Tickets: \$8.00

Day of Tour Tickets: \$10.00

Weekdays - Art Bazaar, 197 Seventh Ave. (Between Second & Third St.)

Weekends - Key Food, Corner of Carroll St. & Seventh Ave.

Art Bazaar, also Ninth St.  
and Seventh Ave., Northwest Corner

presented by the Park Slope Civic Council -- For More information call (718) 788-9150



of public real estate promotion, although realtors were encouraged to take/send their clients. Also in the pioneering days of gentrification in Park Slope bankers were targeted to alleviate the mortgage famine in the area, an anti-red-lining device (see Kasinitz, 1988:172), bankers were also invited to events such as cocktail parties. The Civic Council worked at advertizing certain houses and sought to attract the media therefore attracting attention to Park Slope.

Another pro-gentrification group is The Brownstone Revival Committee founded in the early 1960s by Everett Ortner, pioneer gentrifier in Park Slope. What began as a wine and cheese party had about 1,200 members by 1989. Today most of its operations concentrate on brownstones in Queens, the Bronx and New Jersey, as brownstones in Park Slope have nearly all been renovated (The New York Times, 1989:C9). The Committee's magazine *The Brownstoner* advocates brownstone living, provides historical analysis, rehabilitation tips and voices contemporary news/issues associated with brownstones and their gentrification. In 1984 an article was produced which argued that gentrification is GENESIS not GENOCIDE, revealing the groups sympathies. The magazine is mostly funded by its members, but money is also available from the Council for the Arts and from some banks.

The Brownstone Conference was also established, in 1972, by a Brooklyn realtor; initially it was formed as a brownstone bank to alleviate the red-lining of brownstones. It has no membership or newsletter, instead it runs an annual brownstone fair at Brooklyn Union Gas' head-quarters and an annual ball at the

Montauk club in Park Slope. Another conference, the Back to the City Conference was established in 1974 by Everett Ortner. This conference takes place in a different city each year. It lasts for three days, holding workshops and presentations. In 1974 New York's Waldorf Astoria hosted the conference, sponsored by the Economic Development Council of New York City, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Municipal Art Society of New York and Brooklyn Union Gas. The themes were preservation, finance and promotion:

*"The fact that the Brownstoners invested time and energy into using the media and government indicates that they had, on some level grasped a basic fact about modern urban neighborhoods, namely that they exist within a larger framework. To establish social or geographic boundaries, neighborhood residents must have their claims recognized by external factors in the city's polity and economy" (Kasinitz, 1988:169).*

In response to the red-lining of Park Slope and the release of a critical study by the New York Public Interest Group titled: "Take the Money and Run: Red-lining in Brooklyn" (1975), Herb Steiner a Park Slope home and business owner was about to mount a one man crusade against disinvestment policies, when he joined a group with the same views on disinvestment in the Slope. The pro-gentrification group was named Against Investment Discrimination (AID). They began a campaign to inform the community about disinvestment practices in the area. They had street meetings, drew up leaflets, and actually drew a red line around Greater New York Savings Bank. They were responsible for the withdrawal of \$1,086,000 from red-lining banks during a withdrawal week. The group affiliated itself with the United Block Association. Moe Kornbluth chairperson of the United Block Association said:



*"Denying mortgages was a way for the banks to promote the suburbs, and to denigrate and destroy our neighbourhoods. Many people took it as a personal affront" (Green, 1977:7).*

Against Investment Discrimination undertook their own analysis of mortgage lending practices. Their findings corroborated the New York Public Interest Group report. Greater New York Savings Bank (the only savings bank in Park Slope) with \$1.1 billion in Brooklyn assets was the worst offender with only 66 mortgages in Brooklyn in 1975.

Other responses to disinvestment in Park Slope included legal battles, for example, the case of a Queen Anne row house on 533 2nd Street (Muir, 1977:21). The house had been abandoned for seven years, previous to that it had been a rooming house, but the owner refused to sell. The Second Street Block Association sued to force its sale arguing that it was an eye-sore, frequented by vandals which threatened the status of the neighbourhood. They won their case and in 1976 a professional couple bought the house and rehabilitated it. Pro-gentrification groups in Park Slope, as in Barnsbury, were middle class liberals. Draper (1991:424) discusses their politicization,

*"Typical American reliance on legal, democratic channels to redress grievances and a usual middle class use of discretionary time, money and place in the occupational structure are symbolic of American fair play valued by gentrifiers".*

Not all the interest groups in Park Slope were concerned with rehabilitating middle class housing. The pro-rehabilitation Fifth Avenue Committee is mainly concerned with housing for low and moderate income people. They sponsored the \$137,500

houses behind the new Key Food supermarket built on the old Baltic Street lot which had lain vacant for years since the demolition of a primary school. The Fifth Avenue Committee insisted that the houses had low interest mortgages and that the rental units were rent stabilized. The Fifth Avenue Committee also aided the rehabilitation of 11 houses on Warren Street. The Fifth Avenue Committee's efforts were part financed by Aetna Life and the City.

Interest groups were also formed to address the rehabilitation of business and shopping areas. The Triangle Parks Committee was started by pioneer gentrifiers in the 1960s and was one of the first groups to address the decay found on Flatbush Avenue:

*"The T.P.C was a real grass roots effort...its members went from door to door in city agencies looking for support. They solicited what help they could get from businesses, they collected nominal dues, but mainly were ignored" - Stan Mongin, an organizer of the Triangle Parks Committee (Goodno, 1982b:1).*

They were funded from public and semi-public sources. But the organization died due to the non-participation of the merchants and the continued blight in the area (Goodno, 1982b:1,3,24).

The North Flatbush Avenue Betterment Committee was started in 1978 taking over from the Triangle Parks Committee. By 1982 the North Flatbush Avenue Betterment Committee had begun to develop a business improvement district. The North Flatbush Avenue District Management Association, Inc. was formed to manage the business improvement district; it included all the property owners, residents and

merchants from Flatbush Avenue to Grand Army Plaza to Atlantic Avenue. In the early 1980s it was funded by the City's Office of Economic Development, later the Public Development Corporation, and in the mid-1980s by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Finance was also received from Brooklyn Union Gas and banks in the Park Slope area. The North Flatbush Avenue Betterment Committee disbanded in the late 1980s because it had achieved many of its aims, but also due to funding cuts in urban programmes during the Reagan administration (Draper, 1991:341-345).

The Local Development Corporation was a spin off from the Fifth Avenue Committee and was chartered by the City of New York in 1979 to revitalize 5th Avenue. The revitalization was funded by the City's Public Development Corporation, Brooklyn Union Gas, Consolidated Edison, Hanover Trust, Greater New York Savings Bank, The Dime Savings Bank and Citibank. The goal was "inclusionary revitalization". Through this strategy private development was fostered and the Local Development Corporation forged links with the community to maximize neighbourhood economic gains (Dorris, 1985a:1). The Koch administration were impressed by the dedication and commitment of members of the Local Development Corporation. In 1981 they launched a pilot shopsteading programme (see Chapter 5.3) on 5th Avenue by selling commercial and mixed-use buildings acquired for tax arrears. At prices from \$10,000 to \$100,000, 19 buildings were offered along with low cost loans:

*"Mostly you notice a lot of empty buildings affixed with blue and white signs announcing the program, by Edward I. Koch, Mayor - and the neighborhood*

*remains unimpressed. 'It's been a big disappointment', says Michael Eugenio, 'the City was overdemanding and people just backed off'. 'It's an ironic situation that the shopsteading program may be holding back progress', says Keith Getter, 'because the market forces have been moving quicker than the City'" (Hodenfield, 1986:9).*

From 1982-1985 the Local Development Corporation improved more than 70 storefronts and created and helped to attract over 180 new jobs to 5th Avenue (Dorris, 1985a:1).

Like in Barnsbury, politicization against gentrification in Park Slope was important. A group of radicals The Monacada Library (who were mentioned in the section on class struggle in Chapter 5.6) emerged in Park Slope. A group of ultra-leftists and a unit of the Socialist Workers Party who endorsed the violent tactics of the Black Liberation Army and other armed reactionary movements:

*"The Library opposes the pervasive racism in American society and imperialist adventurism of the U.S. government" (Vail, 1982c:7).*

In the early 1980s The Monacada Library was virulently opposed to the gentrification of Park Slope, for example, it charged that the Slope Citizens Anti-Crime Network (SCAN) was a racist organization which had the goal of driving the blacks and hispanics out of Park Slope. It relied on protests and marches to redress its grievances.

Another group, the Revitalization of the Southern Area of the Slope (ROSA) was a civic organization which wanted to find a solution to displacement problems. In November 1982 it held a protest march with the theme "Unification not Gentrification!", and founded the Park Slope Mobilization Against Displacement and

Harassment. The Revitalization of the Southern Area of the Slope alongside the Fifth Avenue Committee attempted to get people involved in the Tenant Interim Lease Program and other plans for getting buildings turned over to tenants.

In Park Slope (see also Filion's 1991 study of gentrification in Toronto) a grass roots war was waged against those elements of society seen to disturb the social character which Park Slope residents wanted in their area. A number of grass roots groups tried to rid Park Slope of prostitution which in the 1960s and 1970s was active around 5th Avenue. They also opposed a boys home being sited in Park Slope. Following Filion (1991:568) these features of society (prostitutes and a boys home) are at odds with the new middle classes' values and provided undesirable role models for the youth of the area. Yet ironically grass roots groups in Park Slope, like in Barnsbury, were also interested in keeping a mixed social neighbourhood, they were concerned for homelessness and public or low rent housing. Filion (1991) explains this apparently confusing dichotomy in the new middle classes' concerns, i.e. both liberal and protective, by tracing the roots of the dichotomy back to the class's position sandwiched between the capitalist and the working class, yielding a juxtaposition of attitudes.

In summary then the politicized interest groups in Park Slope were more actively organized and outward looking than those in Barnsbury. For example, the Brownstone Revival Committee was initiated in Park Slope, but was operationalized for New York City as a whole, and promoted all over the United States. In Barnsbury

the groups which were active during the early days of the gentrification process became obsolete once the process gained momentum. Moreover these locally constituted grass roots organizations only directed their focus on their own specific area. They neglected areas outside of their constituted boundaries, even if these areas were adjacent and of similar architectural style. In Barnsbury groups active in promoting the revitalization of their area rarely crossed paths, for example, groups in Barnsbury remained quite separate from their counterparts just across the road in Canonbury. The result being that gentrification and its attendant conservation was not promoted more generally within London or within Britain as a whole. The groups active in Barnsbury were more political than those in New York. This may be due to the fact that they had to manipulate government policy at a time when the public had little direct input into local government planning policy.

Moreover, in New York brownstoning is stylized as an act of love:

*"I think one should approach the acquisition of a brownstone, the way one goes into a love affair: eyes open, but half closed too...Pipes can be fixed, cracked walls repaired, painted woodwork stripped, old heating plants replaced. Those are only incidentals. What really counts is love...To the non-lover, it is merely a rowhouse. To the brownstone connoisseur, it is part of an architecturally homogeneous city scape, scaled perfectly for its function, housing many but offering each person space and privacy and a civilized style of living..." (The Brownstoner, 1969).*

In Barnsbury without a singular architectural motif (the brownstone is Park Slope's architectural motif) the love affair is made more difficult. The post-war council architecture also blights the love affair. This may account for the lack of organizations comparable to those pro-gentrification interest groups in Park Slope.



Conservation and redevelopment has been more holistic in Barnsbury due to the politicization of the Barnsbury Association. On the other hand in Park Slope various bodies took it upon themselves to plan gentrification in the area, as such gentrification has been more piecemeal. An overall plan for the redevelopment of Park Slope was not produced, unlike in Barnsbury. Even New York's City Planning tended to view Park Slope in a piecemeal manner, separating it into zones such as the "Park Slope North Contextual Zoning Study" (1990). Ironically this was undertaken in response to concerns expressed by community boards that new development at the scale permitted by the present zoning was disrupting the architectural harmony of the area.

Associated with the politicization of interest groups, I turn now to consider the arrival of the new middle classes in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

#### **6.4 The Arrival of the New Middle Class**

In this section I use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative indicators to illustrate and compare the arrival of the new middle class in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

The arrival of the new middle class in Barnsbury occurred from the late 1950s onwards. But the main influx occurred from 1961-1975 when the professional managerial class increased from 23 per cent to 43 per cent (U.K. Census). Indeed Barnsbury was located in the borough with the highest percentage of change, Islington had an increase of 23.37 per cent in males employed in professional and managerial groups between 1961 to 1971, over twice as many as the next highest

borough, Hammersmith (Hamnett and Williams, 1979:8:Table 3). Islington is argued to be an area of primary gentrification occurring predominantly in the years 1961-1966, the gentrification of, for example, Camden was a later occurrence, 1966-1971. From 1981-1991 the number of Barnsbury residents in socio-economic groups 1 and 2, i.e. the professional and managerial classes has actually decreased by around 3 per cent, whereas in Islington as a whole the number of people in socio-economic groups 1 and 2 has increased by approximately 1 per cent (Table 6.5). This indicates that Barnsbury is in a stage of mature gentrification.

**Table 6.5 Social Class of Residents in Barnsbury and Islington 1981 and 1991**

| Social Class*                 | Barnsbury |      | Islington |      |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
|                               | 1981      | 1991 | 1981      | 1991 |
| SEG I Professional            | 6.9       | 9.4  | 4.6       | 5.7  |
| SEG II Managerial & Technical | 26.0      | 20.0 | 19.3      | 19.1 |
| SEG III(N) Skilled non-manual | 13.3      | 7.7  | 13.3      | 8.5  |
| SEG III(MM) Skilled manual    | 24.3      | 14.1 | 29.6      | 12.8 |
| SEG IV Partly skilled         | 17.9      | 4.4  | 20.7      | 9.0  |
| SEG V Unskilled               | 7.9       | 4.9  | 8.8       | 4.6  |
| Others                        | 3.7       | 6.5  | 3.7       | 5.9  |
| Economically Inactive**       | -         | 33.0 | -         | 34.3 |

Source: U.K. Census (10% sample).

Note: \* based on occupation or previous occupation of head of household, excluding residents of communal establishments.

\*\* this category is included in the 1991 census.

To illustrate socio-economic change at a smaller scale I have subdivided Barnsbury into micro study areas (see Table 6.6) revealing some interesting anomalies. Thornhill Square has gained the greatest increase in the professional/managerial group, a 28 per cent increase from 1971-1991. All the other areas have had at least a 20 per cent increase in the professional/managerial group, except for Barnsbury Park-Barnsbury

Street which has only had a 1 per cent increase, the bulk of its population remain in the service, clerical and sales occupational group. This reflects the fact that Barnsbury Park/Barnsbury Street was the area in Barnsbury to be the most redeveloped by the Greater London Council, Islington Borough Council and the Barnsbury Housing Association, newer (and therefore cheaper) housing is mixed in with the older villas and terraces.

**Table 6.6 Social Change in Barnsbury Micro Study Areas (%) 1971 and 1991**

| Socio-Economic Group of Head of Household  | Area 1 Thornhill Square |      | Area 2 Barnsbury Park/Barnsbury Street |      |
|--|-------------------------|------|--|------|
|  | 1971                    | 1991 | 1971                                   | 1991 |
| 1 Prof / Managerial                        | 8.3                     | 36.5 | 9.5                                    | 10.8 |
| 2 Non Manual<br>(Service, Clerical, Sales) | 25.8                    | 31.8 | 47.6                                   | 45.9 |
| 3 Skilled Manual                           | 18.3                    | 9.4  | 7.6                                    | 10.8 |
| 4 Semi Skilled                             | 17.5                    | 4.7  | 11.9                                   | 8.1  |
| 5 Unskilled Manual                         | 10.0                    | 1.2  | 7.1                                    | 2.7  |
| 6 Non Prof / Self Employed                 | 3.3                     | 5.9  | 2.3                                    | 2.7  |

| Socio-Economic Group of Head of Household  | Area 3 Barnsbury Square |      | Area 4 Gibson Square/Almeida Street |      |
|--|-------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|
|  | 1971                    | 1991 | 1971                                | 1991 |
| 1 Prof / Managerial                        | 17.7                    | 40.3 | 15.7                                | 39.1 |
| 2 Non Manual<br>(Service, Clerical, Sales) | 35.5                    | 29.9 | 32.9                                | 37.0 |
| 3 Skilled Manual                           | 13.3                    | 13.4 | 17.1                                | 10.9 |
| 4 Semi Skilled                             | 11.1                    | 0.0  | 14.3                                | 6.5  |
| 5 Unskilled Manual                         | 11.1                    | 4.5  | 7.1                                 | 0.0  |
| 6 Non Prof / Self Employed                 | 2.2                     | 6.0  | 2.9                                 | 4.3  |

| Socio-Economic Group of<br>Head of Household | Area 5 Cloudesley Road |      |
|--|------------------------|------|
|  | 1971                   | 1991 |
| 1 Prof / Managerial                          | 14.9                   | 37.2 |
| 2 Non Manual<br>(Service, Clerical, Sales)   | 26.7                   | 35.4 |
| 3 Skilled Manual                             | 18.6                   | 10.9 |
| 4 Semi Skilled                               | 12.4                   | 6.0  |
| 5 Unskilled Manual                           | 9.9                    | 1.5  |
| 6 Non Prof / Self<br>Employed                | 3.7                    | 1.3  |

Source: U.K. Census.

Note: Unemployed heads of households make up the remaining percentages.

I have illustrated that Barnsbury was one of the primary areas of gentrification in London, the process being pioneered from the late 1950s. In Table 6.7 I consider how active the process was in the 1980s, afterall it was quite mature by the end of the 1970s. Table 6.7 provides a break-down of changes in social class between 1981 and 1991. This table provides information on those areas which were gentrifying in the 1980s. Gibson Square and Almeida Street had the most significant change in social classes I and II, an increase of 40 per cent 1981-1991. Thornhill Square surprisingly saw the least significant change in social classes I and II, only 6 per cent. Thornhill Square seems to have stabilized before the other areas, maybe because it gentrified later (due to the uneven closure of leaseholds, as mentioned in Chapter 5.2.3 [see also Lees, 1994a]), the process was more rapid and conclusive.

**Table 6.7 Social Class of Residents in Barnsbury Micro Study Areas 1981 and 1991**

|                               | Area 1 Thornhill Square |      | Area 2 Barnsbury Pk/St |      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Social Class* %               | 1981                    | 1991 | 1981                   | 1991 |
| SEG I Professional            | 12                      | 18.8 | 10.9                   | 13.6 |
| SEG II Managerial & Technical | 28.0                    | 27.1 | 22.9                   | 27.3 |
| SEG III(N) Skilled non-manual | 10.1                    | 8.3  | 16.3                   | 9.1  |
| SEG III(MM) Skilled manual    | 31.0                    | 18.8 | 16.3                   | 18.2 |
| SEG IV Partly skilled         | 12.0                    | 6.2  | 18.5                   | 4.5  |
| SEG V Unskilled               | 4.0                     | 2.1  | 2.1                    | 4.5  |
| Others                        | 0.0                     | 4.2  | 0                      | 4.5  |

|                               | Area 3 Barnsbury Square |      | Area 4 Gibson Sq/Almeida St |      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| Social Class* %               | 1981                    | 1991 | 1981                        | 1991 |
| SEG I Professional            | 13.8                    | 23.7 | 12.6                        | 22.2 |
| SEG II Managerial & Technical | 21.7                    | 34.2 | 15.2                        | 48.1 |
| SEG III(N) Skilled non-manual | 9.8                     | 7.9  | 22.8                        | 7.4  |
| SEG III(MM) Skilled manual    | 7.9                     | 23.7 | 10.1                        | 14.8 |
| SEG IV Partly skilled         | 7.9                     | 0.0  | 7.6                         | 7.4  |
| SEG V Unskilled               | 7.9                     | 2.6  | 1.2                         | 0.0  |
| Others                        | 0.0                     | 2.6  | 2.5                         | 0.0  |

|                               | Area 5 Cloudesley Road |      |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Social Class* %               | 1981                   | 1991 |
| SEG I Professional            | 7.0                    | 13.1 |
| SEG II Managerial & Technical | 23.9                   | 42.2 |
| SEG III(N) Skilled non-manual | 17.5                   | 5.0  |
| SEG III(MM) Skilled manual    | 12.6                   | 9.5  |
| SEG IV Partly skilled         | 3.5                    | 5.0  |
| SEG V Unskilled               | 6.3                    | 1.5  |
| Others                        | 4.2                    | 1.0  |

Source: U.K. Census (10% sample).

Note: \* based on occupation or previous occupation of head of household, excluding residents of communal establishments.

I have counted the arrival of the new middle class into Barnsbury numerically, but there were other indicators that a different class had moved into the area. Mooney

(1972) talks of gentrification in London, he characterizes inmoving gentrifiers as follows:

*"Parked yellow Renaults, Victoriana and stripped pine, rooms Healized and Habitized, children in flared jeans on a Sunday - all this marks the presence of the immigrants".*

Mooney illustrates the arrival of the gentrifiers by looking at signifiers of their conspicuous consumption. Objects, decor and activities signify the arrival of a class with different tastes and values. Likewise in Barnsbury there are signifiers of the arrival of the new middle class, yuppie jeeps and antique cars indicate status and conspicuous consumption (Plate 6.5).

Seagrave (1989:382-389) describes Islington's gentrifiers;

*"...the inhabitants are somehow very British folk. The international jet-set do not appreciate, as do we, the inconvenience of the tucked-away, charming - but often narrow-gutted, many-staired-houses, however Georgian the terraces. Some arriviste City types were blown in by the Big Bang, but by and large middle-class radicals (where else do you find an anarchist book shop?) typify the house-buying classes".*

Hay (1972:16) talks specifically about gentrifying Barnsbury:

*"A new invasion began early in the 1960s, almost imperceptably, with the arrival of young academics who found in Barnsbury inexpensive accommodation conveniently situated next to where they taught or did research. They were followed by more professionals, not so impecunious, but like them, unprejudiced in matters of race, or class and undeterred by the fact that the area had not been regarded as fashionable for many a year".*

Many of the pioneer gentrifiers who moved into Barnsbury were artistic and intellectual professionals, whom Raban (1974) named the new "brahmins of North London". An analysis of the education levels of people in Barnsbury shows an influx of better qualified people (see Table 6.8).



**Table 6.8 People with Degrees, Professional and Vocational Qualifications in Barnsbury Ward 1971-1991**

| Year | Number of People |
|------|------------------|
| 1971 | 46               |
| 1981 | 102              |
| 1991 | 1851             |

Source: U.K. Census.

The number of people with degrees, professional and vocational qualifications in Barnsbury increased from 46 in 1971 to 1,851 in 1991. Breaking the figures down to look at micro study areas in Barnsbury (Table 6.9) it is noticeable that areas such as Barnsbury Square and especially Cloudesley Road have attracted larger increases in the number of intelligentsia, these locations are in the heart of gentrified Barnsbury.

**Table 6.9 People with Degrees, Professional and Vocational Qualifications in Barnsbury Micro Study Areas 1971-1991**

| Area 1 Thornhill Square |                  | Area 2 Barnsbury Park/Barnsbury Street |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|------------------|
| Year                    | Number of People | Year                                   | Number of People |
| 1971                    | 4                | 1971                                   | 8                |
| 1981                    | 33               | 1981                                   | 17               |
| 1991                    | 36               | 1991                                   | 11               |

| Area 3 Barnsbury Square |                  | Area 4 Gibson Square/Almeida Street |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Year                    | Number of People | Year                                | Number of People |
| 1971                    | 12               | 1971                                | 8                |
| 1981                    | 11               | 1981                                | 16               |
| 1991                    | 39               | 1991                                | 25               |

| Area 5 Cloudesley Road |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Year                   | Number of People |
| 1971                   | 26               |
| 1981                   | 26               |
| 1991                   | 616              |

Source: U.K. Census (10% sample).

In Canonbury the neighbourhood which was gentrifying across the road from Barnsbury, many of the pioneers were architects, journalists and television producers:

*"publicity spotlighting the celebrities who were moving into Islington had the effect of bringing in many more would-be-trendies and starting a property price-spiral which has over the last five years quadrupled prices in most streets capable of being interestingly renovated"* (Roberts, 1975:218).

In Barnsbury the pioneers were architects, planners, university and college lecturers, comprehensive school teachers, social workers, the police, an ex-advertizing agency girl, a medical photographer, and the ex-wife of an art historian (Bugler, 1968; Chambers, 1974). The middle class newcomers were "overwhelmingly Labour-voting; the most blueblooded person on the street rolls her own cigarettes" (Bugler, 1968).

*"Some of them were men of vision - they could see the possibilities of this rather drab, 'twilight' area, and how it could be transformed physically into a splendid Georgian Village"* (Pitt, 1977:8).

Peter Brown resident of Barnsbury commented on the differences between the pioneer gentrifiers and the later incomers:

*"[Barnsbury] is attracting increasing numbers of trend followers who will tend to be more orthodox middle-class stereotypes than the earlier newcomers, and so more at odds with the backyard scruffiness inherent in a lot of small undertakings...It is this diversity [of landuses] which originally attracted so many of the new owner occupiers to Barnsbury, that is now being threatened by the unbridled action of the market forces unleashed by the very same 'improvement process'"* (Islington Gazette, 19.6.70).

The pioneers liked the ambience of Barnsbury, one pioneer, an author jovially described the characteristic mix in the area:

*"Clothes and accessories for this area must include top-hat, morning coat, country tweeds, grape harvesting sun hat, shamrock and voodoo drum"* (Carson, 1965).

Indeed the ambience of Barnsbury in the 1960s was quite different to that of other gentrified areas in London:

*"I like the place because there's such a lack of the products of English public schools. My man, and all that. People aren't affected here as they are in Chelsea, Hampstead or South Kensington"* (Anthony Froshang, a graphic designer, in Carson, 1965).

Humphries and Taylor (1986:153) argued that prospective gentrifiers became adept at spotting gentrifying areas (see Plate 6.6):

*"House hunting young couples became experts at spotting the up and coming areas. They looked for sand and cement mixers on the pavement - tell tale signs of renovation. And most important, they noted how many houses in a street possessed brass door knockers and were painted white. This was the badge of the pioneer and to outsiders it announced that there was a gentrifier within determined to restore the house to its original glory".*

Barnsbury Road as an area of middle class invasion was described as "a Shangri-la beyond the Himalayas of Pentonville" (Harris, 1974:195). One middle class gentrifier in Barnsbury Dr. Norma Leigham of Barnsbury Street started up a business to help busy house hunters. For £10 she would find the right house for the right customer. The customers filled in questionnaires about the type of accommodation they were seeking and Dr. Heigham would look through estate agents lists and arrange viewings (Holloway and Islington Journal, 12.2.71).

Bugler (1968:228) noted that the new middle class were different to the typical middle class:

*"Rather as the first people to holiday in Majorca were writers, followed in time by the bourgeoisie, so the middle class who move into working class terraces are not the respectable, straight and narrow, Tory-voting middle-class".*

The locals also recognized that the pioneer gentrifiers were not archetypically middle class:

*"These people don't know how to behave. They walk into the pub like they owned the place. I won't have my Lorraine playing with their children. No, I won't have it. Some of their kids don't even have shoes on their feet. I've always seen Lorraine was properly dressed...these aren't what you'd call normal middle class"* (A barmaid from Sudeley Street, in Bugler, 1968:226).

Bugler (1968) quotes some strong reactions by the locals to the newcomers, these were usually associated with quite specific annoyances:

*"They walk into the pub with just their jeans on...sometimes the people up there you can see them on their doorsteps just in swim costumes...He thinks he can park his van anywhere on the street. When I complained, he just smiled and told me to get inside"*.

The reactions of the newcomers to the locals are equally telling:

*"I like to smile at them and stop for a talk. But I don't want to have tea with them"*.

One newcomer, the wife of an architect, said:

*"I don't think they quite understand why we want to pay so much money and go to so much trouble to live in these houses, which they don't like very much. All they want to do is leave them, and live out of London"* (Bugler, 1968:228).

Despite negative reactions, the locals were more tolerant of the middle class incomers than of coloured immigrants, despite the fact that the middle class caused more physical disturbance. Some locals were tolerant of the incomers because they felt that if the middle class moved in it would prevent blacks and other ethnic groups from moving in. Other locals welcomed the gentrifiers because they helped to preserve the familiar:

*"I live in Barnsbury and my children go to the school that their great grandfather attended. I'm thankful that gentrification means that they can still see and enjoy the attractive squares and quiet lanes of Islington and that they do not have to play in a bleak concrete jungle"* (John Rush of Belitha Villas, 1977).

Whether local reaction to the incoming middle class was positive or negative, it was obvious that the incomers were quite different to the local population. The middle class incomers in Barnsbury had a very different lifestyle to that of the local working class population.

Bugler (1968) summarizes some of the lifestyle signifiers of the middle class gentrifier in Barnsbury:

*"You can tell the class of the inhabitants just by the exterior of the houses: bright with paint, the doors in bold colours contrasting with the landlord beige of the tenants dwellings. There are brass knockers, and carefully painted but net-curtainless windows through which you can see they've knocked down partition walls. You can tell from the cars - the Renault 4LS parked up against the working man's fourth-hand Austin Cambridge; the 'Europe Uni' sticker above one bumper, alongside a windscreen disk in the old Hillman reading FREE PASS FOR SANDBAY HOLIDAY PARK".*

In Barnsbury the pioneer gentrifiers rejected the contemporary, aesthetically and stylistically they preferred,

*"...elegant austerity, or what had been called 'conspicuous thrift'. Many had been rebellious students and they rejected the brash materialism and showiness of the affluent society in favouring a natural and unpretentious look. Their furniture was stripped pine; their walls were painted white rather than papered; and their floorboards were sanded to remove the varnish then left uncovered" (Humphries and Taylor, 1986:153).*

The style of gentrification in Barnsbury especially in the 1970s favoured the stark, the pure, the minimal; white walls, unvarnished and bare floorboards, limited ornamentation and decoration. The sobriety of this style of gentrification was probably appropriated from the English Victorian home, which,

*"...was certainly no place for 'art' in the estimation of solid Victorian citizens. Even the wealthy in the cities, at least before the 70s, were generally shamed by the classes just below them into keeping any startling aesthetic novelties they might*

*fancy well hidden behind sober and monotonous street façades"* (Cornforth, 1985:413).

But where the Victorian English hid the interior of their houses from street viewing, gentrifiers in Barnsbury proudly displayed their interiors to the outside world, signifying their status.

Philips (1977) provides a lengthy and revealing description of the style of gentrification in Barnsbury and Islington:

*"One or two carriage lamps are evident, although most Islington gentrifiers frown on such blatant artificialities...Even the multi-coloured doors, once the inevitable hallmark of a gentrified street, seem to have fallen out of flavour. The smart thing now is to have a front door of natural wood, stained light or dark, decorated with antique brass door knockers and knobs...Outside stucco work is painted brilliant white (as opposed to local authority improvements in Islington which favour a less blatant grey)...Originally Islington gentrifiers revelled in what they called 'the natural colours of the brickwork'. But now the preference seems to be for painting exteriors in 'coco brown' or 'charcoal black'...Gentrifiers clutter their doorsteps with tomato plants growing in tubs or herbs in old chimney pots...the most blatant division between the gentrifier and the non-gentrifier seems to be in the matter of curtains. The newcomers with their semi-basement picture windows, display their interiors to the world...the non-gentrified are more discreet. Their lives are invariably masked by net curtains...in Islington it seems that the old northern adage is once more being proved true: 'Everyone's a communist until he owns a ferret'".*

Status in gentrified Barnsbury is as important as in Victorian Barnsbury, signs of failure include;

*"absurd coach lamps, the removal of glazing window bars, the flushing up of panelled street doors, the rendering over of cornices and stucco mouldings and the painting of brickwork and its pointing in contrasting colours"* (Pring, 1968/69).

Changes in patterns of consumption reflected the arrival of the new middle class in Barnsbury. The adjacent shopping areas became gentrified and began to cater for a different class of people. Camden Passage was old and in part derelict. Then in 1966



Christian Sell furniture manufacturers moved into Camden Passage with showrooms for their avant-garde furniture. By the early 1970s Camden Passage had become an expensive emporium for antiques. One of the pioneer gentrifiers in Barnsbury was Robert Carrier, a well-known gourmet, food writer, journalist and public relations expert. He moved into Gibson Square in 1966 and opened a first class French restaurant in Camden Passage, it was decorated by Michael Grimwade "with a strong Victorian flavour". The restaurant was soon joined by others, ironic in that only a decade earlier Islingtonians preferred to eat at the local fish and chip shops (Roberts, 1975:218).

There were problems getting "middle class food" in the early days of gentrification in Islington, today Upper Street, amongst other streets, sells a variety of food (Plate 6.7):

*"You couldn't even get a decent camembert when I first came here...Now there are delicatessens all over the place"* (A Doctor from Barnsbury, in Phillips, 1977).

Indeed, in the late 1950s some restaurants in Barnsbury had an unsavoury reputation. In 1959 the Dervish Cafe opened at 13 Theberton Street, it was described by a police witness as:

*"the worst cafe in the whole of Islington...Everything one can think of,...is associated with this cafe, gaming, drugs, offensive weapons, immoral earnings and drunkenness".*

It closed in 1962 when the owners were sent to prison (Connell, 1989:11). But as gentrification took off,

*"Pretty enclaves of sweet peace were created in a district which had been priced as the lowest of the low on the Monopoly Board but which had now become nearly as desirable as Park Lane or Mayfair" (Hay, 1972:17).*

Pubs and restaurants are an important part of lifestyle in Barnsbury, in the Summer a continental street café type atmosphere opens up (Plate 6.8). In direct contrast Chapel Market (Plate 6.9) located between Liverpool Road and Pentonville Street remains an area in which the working classes and the middle classes both shop, there one finds the main supermarkets and many small shops and market stalls. But Chapel Market has now been designated as a redevelopment area.

Changes in the consumption of politics also indicated the arrival of a new set of people in Barnsbury. The politics of some of the new middle class in Barnsbury were radical, Islington's Labour party assumed a new variety of left wing politics. The radicals in the late 1970s and early 1980s pursued ideas such as "short life housing user groups", who were basically squatters, play groups with more play leaders than children, bodies like Islington Peoples Rights who produced a pamphlet on how to squat, and even a gay dating agency. The area became known as "The Peoples Republic of Islington" (Seagrave, 1989:69-70):

*"They have made themselves an almost inextricable part of a system of local government which never envisaged anything like them - and they work with the advantage that few people realize what is happening" (Moore, 1981, 12th January).*

More recently, law and energy centres along Upper Street reveal characteristics of the surrounding clientele, i.e. their social and environmental awareness (Vercoe, 1989:150).

In Park Slope like in Barnsbury there are a variety of indicators associated with the arrival of the new middle class. An increasingly affluent population certainly entered the area, in 1960 the median income in the area was \$5,725, the poorest census tract with an median family income of \$3,859 was tract 129, the richest tract was 165 with an median income of \$8,204 (Source: 1960 U.S. Census Data). In 1970 the median income for the area was \$8,283, the richest tract was again 165 with an income of \$14,500 and the poorest tract 129.01 at \$5,295 (Source: 1970 U.S. Census Data). In 1980 the median income was \$12,818 (the median income for New York City in 1980 was \$13,000 [Stegman, 1985]), the richest tract 165 at \$20,195 and the poorest 129.02 at \$7,390 (Source: 1980 U.S. Census). In 1990 the median income was \$49,793, the richest tract 165 at \$90,482 and the poorest 131 at \$28,547 (Source: 1990 U.S. Census). The disparity between the richest and the poorest tracts in the area increased fourteen times between 1960 and 1990.

Park Slope's population became increasingly professional in terms of occupation and increasingly educated in terms of qualifications. The percentage of the population in professional and managerial occupations increased from 17 per cent in 1950 to 54 per cent in 1990, whilst the proportion of manual workers declined from 39 per cent in 1950 to 10 per cent in 1990 (Table 6.10).

**Table 6.10 Occupations in Park Slope 1950-1990 (%)**

|                                       | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Professional/Managerial               | 17   | 17   | 20   | 37   | 54   |
| Sales/Clerical                        | 33   | 31   | 32   | 31   | 21   |
| Service                               | 12   | 13   | 14   | 12   | 7    |
| Craftsmen/Operatives and<br>Labourers | 39   | 39   | 34   | 20   | 10   |

Source: U.S. Census.

The percentage of residents with a college education increased by nearly 50 per cent from 1960 to 1990 (Table 6.11). The gentrifiers were certainly well educated, as Draper (1991:423) commented:

*"Tactics which require legal savvy, bureaucratic know-how and political and media sophistication put the gentrifiers in an advantageous place to succeed in struggles for control of resources, territory, or political processes which set geographic boundaries and/or spatial definitions (i.e. zoning codes) in urban areas".*

There are a variety of quality preferences in Park Slope to attract a well educated and professional population. Park Slope has Prospect Park, it is located near to all Brooklyn's universities and colleges, for example, Polytechnic Institute of New York, Long Island University, the Pratt Institute, and it is only a subway ride away from New York University, Columbia University and Cooper Union in Manhattan. There are well known museums and libraries in the area, for example, the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Central Library, the Brooklyn Academy of Music. For theatres and entertainment Brooklyn's central business district is only 10-15 minutes walk, and Manhattan's entertainment district is only 15-20 minutes by subway.

**Table 6.11 Percentage of Park Slope residents with 4 or more years of College 1960-1980, and percentage of residents with a bachelors degree or higher 1990**

| Year | %    |
|------|------|
| 1960 | 4.3  |
| 1970 | 6.2  |
| 1980 | 20.0 |
| 1990 | 50.0 |

Source: U.S. Census.

The data on income, occupation and qualifications suggests that an increasingly affluent and better educated population entered Park Slope, but how were these incomers culturally different? There are a variety of indicators:

*"The newer residents eat different foods, wear different clothing, have different hobbies, surround themselves with different furniture than previous Park Slopers"* (Gershun, 1975a).

The neighbourhood changed to accommodate new tastes, trendy cuisine began to be offered on and around 7th Avenue, for example, sushi, Mexican, Thai, Chinese, and Continental food. This change has been characterized as "...from bagels to brioche" (Miller, 1989). The Eugenio brothers who have owned a fish shop on 5th Avenue for a number of years also characterized the arrival of the middle class in terms of food:

*"These days...Eugenio and Sons is selling halibut, filet of sole, swordfish, fish without bones, expensive fish. Ten years ago they sold headfish, porgies, flounders, weak, perch, whiting, mackerel, bluefish"* (Hodenfield, 1986:9).

There are new craft shops and speciality stores, designer clothes stores, for example, Benetton. Seventh Avenue is the shopping street for Park Slope's gentrifiers (Plate 6.10):

*"Le Parc Gourmet, a stunning multi-level epicurean emporium, fine foods restaurant with facilities for private parties, and a catering service to boot, provides an excellent case in point for understated elegance and quality in Park Slope. Talking with the owners, John Farran and Jack Koyen, shortly after Le Parc's*

*successful debut last Summer, we were advised that 'the omission of a neon sign or flamboyant entryway was absolutely intentional. The wooden, non-illuminated, simply lettered sign we chose is true to the subtle engagingness of the neighbourhood'" (Griffin, 1982:27).*

The arrival of the new middle class created a particular ambience in Park Slope,

*"The atmosphere is thick with style and expectation; this is a place to be, and to be seen" (Rosenberg, 1987:565).*

This new atmosphere was noted as far back as the early 1970s by a resident of the Slope:

*"Prospect Park is filled with longhairs and sideburns, expensive dogs with exotic names, dungarees, brilliantly colored clothes and antedeluvian furs and plastic, expensive-kite fliers and slack-jawed Frisbee levitators. There are festivals and rallies now. Everyone gets stoned and groovy and annunciates love. There are block festivals...and, dig it, CULTURAL EVENTS [his emphasis], poetry readings...Womens lib, sex and rent-saving communes, even revolutionary soviets, and antique cars are washed down with loving care just like in the suburbs" (Yurick, 1972:15).*

Especially in the early days, gentrification in Park Slope was not just about profit potential, social cultural potential was equally if not more important. For example, one journalist commenting on brownstoning in Park Slope noted that:

*"No one recommended buying brownstones as an investment per se. Most people noted that if they put their money into U.S. Treasury notes, if not Big Mac bonds, they would realize at least the same return with less effort" (Gershun, 1975:28).*

The new breed of middle class brownstone owner in Park Slope was characterized as: *"...idealistic, unprejudiced, adventurous and energetic" (Holton, 1968).* The Ortner who were amongst the first pioneer gentrifiers in Park Slope in 1963, and who helped start many of the neighbourhood organizations, bought more than just a gentrifiable building:



*"...Along with 4 stories of Victorian elegance, they bought a lifestyle, an avocation, and a challenge" (The Old House Journal, 1973).*

In Park Slope, as in Barnsbury, it appears from journalistic accounts that the pioneers<sup>49</sup> were not the status seekers that the succeeding gentrifiers were. For what status could the pioneers gain from entering a blighted area, the later gentrifiers were instead entering an "up and coming" neighbourhood. A couple who had lived in Berkeley Place since the 1930s remembered the 1960s when many of their friends fled selling cheap in fear of blockbusting and crime, the pioneers puzzled them:

*"I couldn't understand why a nice couple like that would buy into a neighborhood like this..." (Colins, 1981:1,12).*

But later the pioneers fell victim to the increasing status of the area: Sheila Averbach bought into Berkeley Place in 1976 because of the "neighborhood spirit" and "real small town feeling", but as Park Slope became a trendy alternative to Manhattan;

*"it's gotten much colder...people don't know their neighbors. It isn't families coming in any more" - Zinaida Sherker of the store "One Smart Cookie" (Colins, 1981:1,12).*

In the late 1980s people in Park Slope were worried about

*"...their Walt Whitman dream of an egalitarian urban paradise, where people live well beyond tolerance, delighting in the audiovisual differences which their lives reveal" (Jordan, 1988).*

But Park Slope was still seen as a mixed community,

*"...it explodes a slew of nasty commonplaces: that the benefits of urban integration entail the sacrifice of middle class concerns such as stable, or rising, property values, safety on the streets..." (Jordan, 1988).*

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<sup>49</sup> "...pioneers are considered risk-oblivious gentrifiers such as artists, actors, journalists, gays, and some sort of alternative drop-outs. Sometimes it is said that these pioneers are the renters (the gentrifiers being the owners), and they are the youngest, poorest, etc., of all invaders" (Dangschat, 1991:69).

Residents were vocal about the benefits of a mixed area. Jim Roginski said that Park Slope had pulled off a melting pot coup because the new people never lost sight of the old residents role in preserving the neighbourhood. The area is very community based:

*"The residents of 10th Street have elevated sharing to an art form. The working moms share housekeepers and babysitters, and the stay at home moms share children. They watch eachothers homes. They watch eachothers cars. They share coffee, advice, and an underlying sense of responsibility to maintain the 'small town atmosphere with a big city attitude' as Roginski puts it" (Dobie, 1985).*

The attraction for many of the middle classes is the sense of community. I asked one realtor whether this community is real or perceived, she answered:

*"Oh its real! I mean Saturday walking on 7th Avenue or Sunday, you really have a good feeling. You know there's a flea market, there are people that have their laundry on their arm, their kids in tow, I mean things are very vibrant" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

The ambience of Park Slope is a result of the fact that many of the gentrifiers were one time hippies:

*"Like artists, 1960s radicals were another important trickle in the early 1970s migration stream. They, too, were drawn by the affordable space, the park, and the presence of others like themselves. Veterans of the antiwar, civil rights and feminist movements quickly found each other in, and drew eachother in, and drew each other to, this budding urban community" (Rosenberg, 1987:67).*

During an interview in Spring 1992, Bonny the manageress of one real estate agency in Park Slope, also reiterated this fact:

*"It's sort of where all the old hippies came to die. When we first moved here my comment to my husband was, 'you wondered what happened to all the other flower children, they're in the Park Slope food cooperative and they all have children named Jason and Joshua. It's what happened to my generation. They got greyer and had children - once they had two kids they decided to buy houses. Park Slope is filled with old hippies!"*

As such Park Slope has continually stressed democratic and egalitarian<sup>50</sup> notions synonymous with a "yuppified flower power generation" - the craving for a racially and socially mixed area, the love of the New York "stoop lifestyle" (Plate 6.11), i.e. street life socializing, the attempts at community as seen in the many block parties, and, the varying self-help schemes. School politics reflect the left and liberal sympathies. Some of the elementary schools have a "peace curriculum (Rosenberg, 1987:567). Park Slopers seem indeed to be very liberal, not even concerned by the appearance of a group of Moonies on 2nd Street in the late 1970s. Rather some Park Slopers went to Moonie lectures and wanted to learn about unification principles, to help promote community in the neighbourhood. The Moonies had also resided in Sheepshead Bay and Brooklyn Heights, but they got their best response in Park Slope. The Moonies attended a meeting of the Fifth Avenue Committee, Park Slope Together and the Second Street Block Association. Fran Justa from the Fifth Avenue Committee said that it was good that the Moonies were involved in the committee's activities (The Phoenix, 1978).

One result of a concentration of old hippies in Park Slope is that drugs are still a problem, the difference being that they are no longer visible:

*"This is a community that can afford to use drugs secretly - they are closet druggies. They go buy their drugs on 5th Avenue, and then they come back and smoke them on 8th Avenue" (Connor, 1990).*

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<sup>50</sup> "There is a suspicion that the Yuppie support for egalitarianism is prompted by the need to feel 'good' about issues. In the United States Lekachman has voiced this concern. 'Yuppies are pro choice, in their careers, lifestyles and political representatives'" (Whimster, 1992:322).

The image in Park Slope then is less of yuppification and more of hippification. Gentrifiers in Park Slope do not like the yuppification in places such as Brooklyn Heights. Park Slope remains a step back from complete yuppification and remains socially mixed:

*"Brooklyn Heights I lived in from '69 until the 1980s and it was a lot more fun in the 1970s, a lot better stores, a lot better mix of people. Now the whole yuppification thing has made it; I mean these people don't even know who their neighbours are, so the building isn't safe. They don't know that person with the television walking out the building does not live in that building. In the south Slope where it's working class; I mean if somebody is pulling on my car handle door, some little old lady on the stoop goes, 'that isn't your car, she lives in the other building, what do you want?' [Irish working class accent emphasized]. They sit on the stoop and know what's going on. That's broken down in Brooklyn Heights, and on the Upper East Side in Manhattan, and on the Upper West Side. It's already happened to some extent on the real fancy park blocks, those real pretty park blocks are less safe now. Like, I live on a working class block, there's never a time I've come home that someone who lives on the block isn't sitting on a stoop, whether it's morning, noon or night. But if the neighbourhood gets sheeker and fancier you don't want people sitting on the stoop. So the coop says 'No Stoop Sitting!', so nobody knows who lives next door anymore" (Interview with realtor and resident of the south Slope, Spring 1992).*

But these images are fading and,

*"It is to be expected that, as a result, over the longer term throughout Park Slope as a whole, there will be a narrowing of the ethnic and income mixes" (Brennan, 1982a:2-3).*

Despite this Brennan (1982a:3) speculates that it is unlikely that Park Slope will become a middle class ghetto because many minority households have lived there for years and want to stay put. There is an increase in the number of minority professionals buying, and many blue collar families especially those in the South Slope who have lived for decades in their paid for homes, will stay there because it is home.

The social mix in Park Slope has attracted and continues to attract the new middle class. The new middle class in Park Slope are characterized by ambiguity, they are "neither nor", they are a mish mash of business people, academics, artists, singles, couples, families, whites, blacks, Jews, Italians, gays, lesbians, Republicans, and leftists. They have come from Manhattan, the suburbs, were brought up in the area and returned, from out of state, and from abroad. The neighbourhood has attractions for a variety of people:

*"Park Slope is a very strong, viable neighbourhood. If you have children there's a whole 'mommy class', if you are professionals, a two-income type, no children, there are good restaurants, you can drop off your dry-cleaning, good commute to the city"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

Alternative lifestyles are accepted in Park Slope. Indeed Park Slope constitutes what may be one of the largest lesbian communities in the United States (Rothenberg, 1993). The acceptance of the gay community is seen in the actions of neighbours when a gay couple John Sielsky and Jim Dozmati renovated a burnt out shell on 10th Street. After they had moved in neighbours sent a "welcome wagon" to bring them dinner (Dobie, 1985). Rothenberg (1993:16) asks,

*"what is this connection between gays and lesbians and brownstones? There's Echo Park in L.A., there's San Francisco, Park Slope, why?"*

The answer posited is that lesbians are part of a larger population of artists and others who want to live near the cultural amenities of the city. The lesbian community is an important part of the culture of Park Slope, indeed Park Slope schools are already used to the reality of lesbian parents. The gay community in Park Slope is political, for example, in 1991 GLOBE (Gays and Lesbians in Brooklyn and Elsewhere),

marched in Park Slope protesting violence against gays and lesbians. They wanted to assert that lesbians should be able to feel safe in Park Slope (Rothenberg, 1993:1).

A proportion of the middle class in Park Slope are black, attracted to a racially tolerant community. The black middle class are seen to have different tastes than the white middle class. For example, architecturally, there is a discrepancy between the type of house that middle class whites and blacks prefer:

*"Middle class blacks tend to like much bigger bedrooms, they tend to have more formal furniture, they tend to have more bedroom suites. I know when I'm showing to a (white) yuppie type couple, they may have a futon and don't have to worry about the size of the bedroom. But if I'm showing to a black middle class couple they're more likely to have more formal furniture, they've invested more money in furniture. I would say just the lower end of middle class white will be a little funkier on the condition, the black middle class want it in better condition - like with a rental they're goin' to want a dish washer - there's no question. I don't know why! One developer called and said the yuppies are dead, it's the black middle class that are buying, I said fine if you know that put in bigger bedrooms in your damn coops because a bedroom this size doesn't make it. You're not going to put a Queen sized bed, two full dressers, two night tables and maybe an armoire in a bedroom this size" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

De Bres (1988) overemphasizes white racial resegregation in Park Slope due to gentrification, in 1990 20 per cent of Park Slope's population was black (U.S. Census).

In summary, there are many similarities between the middle class gentrifiers in Barnsbury and Park Slope and their consumption patterns. This illustrates the significance of the globalization of culture. The differences are contextual anomalies reflecting cultural and stylistic differences, for example, the style of gentrification in Barnsbury was "conspicuous thrift", whilst that in Park Slope has been more elegant



and ostentacious (Plate 6.12). The brownstones in Park Slope are more ornamented than those in Barnsbury, symptomatic of the fact that external ornamentation was not frowned upon in Victorian New York.

I turn now to consider how gentrification was commodified and marketed in association with the arrival of the new middle class.

### **6.5 Commodification and Marketing Strategies**

In this section the processes which lead to the consumption of a property in gentrification, i.e. commodification and marketing strategies, are discussed in order to investigate any differences between Barnsbury and Park Slope.

As early as 1961 properties which had already been gentrified were on the market in Barnsbury:

*"Barnsbury - Charming semi-detached property in conveniently placed cul-de-sac. Recently renovated in very pleasant manner and available with vacant possession. Freehold £3,750" (Islington Gazette, 2.5.61).*

In the late 1960s and early 1970s estate agents in Barnsbury were advertizing property with phrases such as: "rapidly improving property", "up-and-coming street", and "desirable, Georgian style residence in need of extensive renovation" (Power, 1972:1). The Islington Gazette was one of the main forums for advertizing the gentrifying Barnsbury, for example:

*"Thornhill Grove - Quiet cul-de-sac. Early Victorian 2 bed, drawing room w/folding doors, room in basement. Restorers Dream. Freehold £8,750" (Islington Gazette, 24.4.70),*

and,

*"Cloudesley Road N1 - Regency terraced house. Fully Vacant Freehold. 8 rooms, 2 W.C.s, **requires extensive renovation**. Offers around £21,000" (Islington Gazette, 5.3.76).*

The relevance of the type of leasehold which I discussed in Chapter 5.2.3 is quite evident, real estate agencies stressed the "freehold" nature of some properties, or the length of time leasehold properties had to run.

Estate agencies would also advertize in papers such as The Times, The Sunday Times and The Observer, these were "felt to be a good way of reaching the 'liberal' intellectual type, who apparently favoured Islington" (Williams, 1976:79). By the 1980s the more basic functional advertizements of the 1960s and 1970s were replaced by advertizements which expressed the luxury aspect of the gentrified property in Barnsbury, for example,

*"Cloudesley Road - A beautiful lower ground and ground floor maisonette within an elegant Regency terrace property. The maisonette has recently been **completely refurbished and modernized**. 2 beds, fitted kitchen with **hob oven and extractor fan**. **Luxury bathroom and cloakroom**. Double reception. Sole use of garden, gas central heating. 92 year lease. £85,000 Leasehold" (Warmans Estate Agency, Islington Gazette, 28.6.85),*

and,

*"Barnsbury N1 - A selection of 4 **newly converted flats** offering gas central heating, Zanussi fitted kitchen, **luxury bathroom**. Entryphone, fitted carpets. 2 bed maisonette and roof terrace from £63,950; 1 bed from £39,950" (Islington Gazette, 28.6.85).*

By the late 1980s some advertizements for the more expensive property aimed to attract the very well off middle class:

*"Barnsbury Street - Perhaps the finest period house on the market in the area. **Expertly restored and refurbished...Brass light and door fittings, period mouldings and fireplaces and luxury newly fitted carpets throughout add the finishing touches***

*to this sumptuous and elegant home. £425,000 Freehold; 4 double beds" (Islington Chronicle, 21.10.87).*

But in the late 1980s alongside renovated property there were still some options open for those wishing to convert:

*"£100,000 Freehold, Barnsbury Street - A 3 storey early Victorian terraced property, which is in excellent condition, the ground floor being used as an arts and crafts shop - but we understand there would be no problems for permission to revert back to residential use. The accommodation would make a 2/3 bedroomed house and would cost in the region of £15,000 to convert" (Stickley and Kent Property Gazette, 1986).*

As gentrification in Barnsbury progressed estate agents exploited Barnsbury's historic associations more readily, for example,

*"Famous C19th royal biographer Hannah Lawrence, once lived in this delightful Georgian house in Barnsbury's popular and pretty Ripplevale Grove. The Grade 2, double-fronted, 4-bedroomed house has been faithfully restored and features a 120 feet secluded country garden full of cherry trees, honeysuckle, apple and roses. It is expected to fetch around £450,000" (Islington Chronicle, 2.12.87).*

Historic associations, such as the fact that Barnsbury was built as a garden suburb are reflected in property advertizements, features associated with the countryside are emphasized:

*"Ripplevale Grove - A perfectly proportioned double fronted Georgian gem with 100 inches of rambling walled country garden. In need of updating but with great charm and retaining all features. £375,000 Freehold" (Holden Matthews Advertizement, 1989).*

A survey of advertizements in the 1990s revealed those pockets of Barnsbury yet to be fully renovated. Offord Road on the boundary of the study area was undergoing significant ammounts of rehabilitation in 1992:

*"Offord Road Islington - £169,950 - Your chance to acquire this substantial four storey period house situated in one of Islington's most convenient locations.*

*Currently arranged as Bedsitters, this magnificent property would easily convert back to its former glory. With its space potential and southfacing 40ft Garden the property should be viewed without delay"* (Bairstow Eves, 1992 Advertizement).

This location corresponds with the information in Chapter 5.4 on the real estate market and areas which were available to be gentrified in the 1990s. In the Summer of 1992, Mountford House in Barnsbury Square (Plate 6.13), a five-bayed villa which had been used as a factory, had been part renovated and was advertized for further renovation:

*"A unique opportunity to purchase a self-contained section of the Mountford House, a fine Georgian building, in Barnsbury Square. This portion of the house has recently been used as commercial offices and we understand planning permission has been applied for change of use to residential. The property has its own side access and front door and the accommodation provides two large rooms of noble proportions on each floor level. The Freeholder wishes to dispose of the three upper levels of the building which could be converted into a magnificent 3/4 bedroom maisonette, subject to planning, with the benefit of a 40 inch walled area currently tarmaced to provide off-street parking. This area could easily be landscaped to provide a pretty and secluded south facing garden"* (Copping Joyce, 1992, Advertizement).

Details included doors with ornate original archetraving, and floor to ceiling panelled sash windows.

During interviews I asked real estate agents in Barnsbury about their marketing strategies. When asked about attempts at the "hard sell" and the associated advertizing techniques, one estate agent said:

*"When you put an offer in for a property you've got maybe 6-8 weeks to think about it, get a survey done, apply for a mortgage. If you use brash techniques you almost force someone into buying and putting an offer in for a property. They've got 2 months to change their mind, so its really not worth it. All you can do is try and get as many viewings on the property as possible, in the viewings you may be a bit more aggressive if you like"* (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).

When asked about descriptive techniques in advertizing a property

another estate agent answered:

*"I draw the line at power points and pendant lights. If you describe a room its not really necessary to put down every single thing you've got in it, it can often be better to put down the kind of feeling the room gave you. 'A light west facing room', is going to say a lot more than fitted carpet, power points, etc. You have to be very careful about what details you put down anyway, with the misdescriptions act coming in you can't afford to be over the top" (Interview, Estate Agent, Summer 1992).*

It seems then that advertizing property in Barnsbury has become more sophisticated over time, where advertizements in the 1960s stressed the functionality of property towards renovation, by the 1980s and 1990s the historicity of Barnsbury was emphasized alongside the luxury nature of much of the renovated property. An anecdotal example of commodification in Barnsbury was the opening of a pottery shop on Barnsbury Street which specialized in making clay copies of Georgian houses in Barnsbury for customers (Islington Gazette, 15.8.80).

But it was (and is) not just real estate agencies who were active in marketing and commodifying Barnsbury, other bodies had an important influence on the gentrification process.

The Greater London Council promoted environmental conservation and its attendant gentrification in London:

*"In a period of so much fundamental change, it is more than ever important to provide a sense of continuity and identity in our lives and to keep some static references from the past. An element of stability in the human habitat is necessary to healthy and balanced living. Just as complete absence of change produces boredom, so excessive change produces disorientation. For these reasons, as well as the obvious claims of great architecture, fine design and irreplaceable craftsmanship, historic buildings ought to be treasured. The aim of planning, both at strategic and local level is to balance this need against the individual and essential*

*piecemeal pressures of development and the demands of modern society for greater mobility and consumption, with all that entails for the quality of our surroundings"* (Greater London Council, 1971:8).

The Greater London Council suggested the reconstruction of community life in London as a response to the fission of London, a result of the policies of decentralization mentioned in Chapter 5.2.1. Environmental areas, human habitats, were urged to formulate their own identity and to act in a cohesive manner in the reconstruction of London. Mooney (1972) is sceptical about these kinds of responses to nihilism:

*"Naturally people tend to sentimentalize. The past is generally smoked by self-deception, especially when the present is less than you would like it to be...But in a sense, an environment, a community, is being patched together like those lengths of expensive patchwork material you can buy in smart fabric shops, to keep in with fashion trends. They look good, but lack the texture, the variety, the evidence of time spent, possessed by the real old fashioned thing, marred though it may be by the occasional hole".*

The Greater London Development Plan formulated by the Greater London Council included an important conservation ethic:

*"The Council proposes, through the medium of the Plan, to initiate a more vigorous and comprehensive policy for the conservation of the features that give London its distinctive character"* (Greater London Council, 1976:11).

But Rock (1970) criticized the Greater London Development Plan, arguing that it was ineffective with respect to conservation because of limited funds and limited staff, as such the actual onus fell on local authorities. Ash (1970) criticizes the Greater London Development Plan's "facile recipe" of bringing the middle classes back to the inner-city, arguing,



*"contrary to the logic of the Greater London Development Plan, the middle income groups are themselves already visibly forcing the issue - in places like **Barnsbury** the very front lines of the struggle can be drawn..."*

Here we can see the debate with respect to commodification and gentrification, some authors would argue that gentrifiers in Barnsbury would gentrify irrespective of renovation strategies promoted by either government bodies or real estate agencies.

Indeed, Cornforth (1985:47) argues that it was as early as 1933-1934 that the British became disenchanted with the modern movement and began to look back in history and became preservationist. Yet, conservation policy in Britain dates much later.

In Britain the Civic Trust was formed in 1957 supported by voluntary contributions, their aim was to improve the appearance of both town and country. They had eight main functions (Civic Trust, 1967:15): 1. to comment on standards by publicizing their views on good and bad development, 2. to act as a watchdog, anticipating or arresting the processes of decay and destruction by notifying the local authority during the early stage or approaching the owner direct, 3. to keep a vigilant eye on all planning applications that were likely to affect conservation areas and to make their comments or objections to the planning authority, 4. to survey potential conservation areas worthy of designation and put forward proposals for their enhancement, 5. to undertake or sponsor positive schemes or improvements, 6. to restore or persuade to restore buildings, 7. to keep archives on buildings, record and photograph, and to, 8. inform the public with guides, lectures, and films. To own property a conservation society must register as a trust, a limited company or a housing society, the latter is

the cheapest and simplest way. Registration as a housing society is done under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893. The main stipulation is that the housing has to be let not sold. The 1961 Housing Act provided loans for Housing Associations to build, convert or improve dwellings. The 1964 Housing Act made some finance available for cooperative housing programmes (Civic Trust, 1967:35).

Conservation policy in Britain (see Lees, 1994a) is set out under section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971. Section 277A brings the demolition of buildings in conservation areas under control and section 277B requires local authorities to prepare schemes of preservation and enhancement for their conservation areas. The statutory definition of a conservation area is,

*"[an area which is] of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"* (Department of the Environment, 1977, sections 31 and 32).

In later reports the conservation ethic was less rigid and change was accommodated more readily:

*"Conservation allows for change as well as preservation. There are many cases where it is right to 'conserve as found'. But there are circumstances too where our architectural heritage has to be able to accommodate not only changes of use but also new buildings nearby"* (Department of the Environment, 1987).

Finance for conservation comes from a variety of sources; the local authority (under the Local Authority [Historic Buildings] Act 1962) can allocate grants and loans to buildings of historical interest whether they are listed or not. The National Heritage Act 1980 allows this group to provide grants and loans for the acquisition, maintenance or preservation of land or a building which is thought to be of aesthetic

or architectural interest. The Architectural Heritage Fund loans capital for the restoration of historic buildings. Local authorities can allocate improvement grants under the 1985 Housing Act for listed buildings and those in a designated conservation area (Department of the Environment, 1987).

In 1969 alone Barnsbury had around 300 buildings listed as of architectural or historic interest by the Greater London Council's Historic Monuments Division (Pring, 1968/1969:2). Ken Pring of the pro-conservation Barnsbury Association proposed the use of the following acts in the rehabilitation and conservation of Barnsbury: 1. the Local Authority's (Historic Buildings) Act 1962, 2. the Civic Amenities Act 1967, 3. the Housing Subsidies Act 1967, 4. the Housing Act 1964, 5. the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 and the Friendly Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1968, 6. the "Old Houses into New Homes", White Paper 1968, 7. the Transport Act 1968, and the, 8. Town and Country Planning Act 1968. Furthermore the Barnsbury Association published a cost benefit analysis for the rehabilitation of Barnsbury (Horne, 1970). Horne concluded that the benefits of rehabilitation outweighed the costs (see Table 6.12). As such conservation was viewed in a postive manner.

**Table 6.12 The Costs and Benefits for Rehabilitation in Barnsbury (£)**

|                         | Costs      |                        | Benefits   |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Housing                 | 18,600,000 | Mortgage Payments      | 11,327,000 |
| Traffic                 | 1,250,000  | Rates                  | 5,550,000  |
| Parking                 | 780,000    | Garage Rents           | 2,313,000  |
| Environmental           | 500,000    | Preservation of        | 4,050,000  |
| Improvements            |            | Architectural Heritage |            |
| Promotion               | 250,000    | Social Benefit         | 2,151,000  |
| Organization            | 267,000    |                        |            |
| Servicing & Maintenance | 2,320,000  |                        |            |
| of Dwellings            |            |                        |            |
| Extra Travel Costs      | 1,030,000  |                        |            |
| Total                   | 24,997,000 |                        | 25,391,000 |

Source: Horne, 1970:Table II.

Property in Barnsbury is a mixture of terraces, detached and semi-detached villas. The semi-detached houses on Mountford Crescent are bow fronted and white stuccoed. The terraces on Malvern Terrace are double fronted two-storied Georgian brick cottages with slate pitched roofs. Eclecticism is very evident on Richmond Avenue (Plate 6.14), the houses are Victorian with medallioned stucco, and on either side of each doorway there are Egyptian motifs, i.e. sphinxes, Cleopatra needles and obelisks. According to Pring (1968/1969:4) the aesthetics in the area are not merely related to its beautiful architecture, the whole spatial layout of the area is important, its geometry, vistas open and closed, its squares, its glimpsed prospects, its panoramas; and the juxtaposition of these. Indeed, the townscape layout in Barnsbury is seen to be definitively English,

*"the contrasts between Thornhill and Lonsdale Squares and Thornhill Gardens and Cloudesley Square, each set into a varied street pattern, add surprise and liveliness to the townscape, and the graduation in scale from the cottage like two storey housing at the top of Ripplevale Grove, to the rigid Gothic 5 storied Lonsdale Square are essentially English" (Pring, 1968/1969:12),*

and,

*"Barnsbury's squares unlike those of Bloomsbury, are quite unlike the continental Baroque squares which were only elements in a grand composition. The concept of the square in England is quite different - to quote John Summerson on the Earl of Southampton 'he realized that a square was not enough by itself. It had to be a centre of a number of smaller, less expensive streets, and perhaps a church. In fact, the whole thing to have a life of its own'" (Pring, 1968/1969:12-13).*

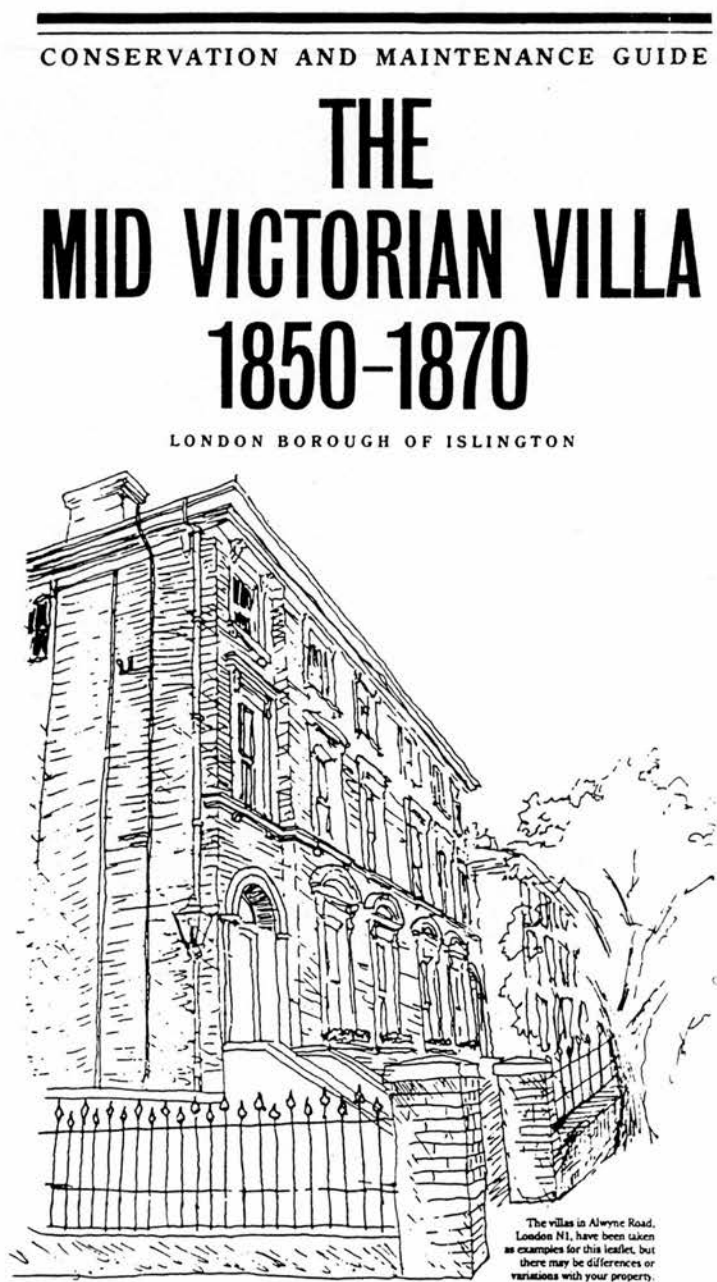
Barnsbury follows this design, the squares are centrifugal points for their surrounding streets. Pring amongst others wanted restoration work to be sympathetic with the history and heritage of the area.

In the 1980 Islington Development Plan, Islington Borough Council laid out its policy on conservation areas in Islington. Islington Borough Council would designate, enhance and protect conservation areas. Demolition and new building would be strictly controlled and 'outline' planning permission would not normally be granted in the conservation area. Islington Borough Council even published its own conservation and maintenance guide for the mid-Victorian villa (see Figure 6.2).

Conservation was then marketed or promoted in Barnsbury from a variety of different sources. As mentioned in the section on the politicization of interest groups many of the locals were not impressed by the conservation ethic and its attendant gentrification. Ray Spreadbury, leader of the Islington tenants and member of the Barnsbury Action Group commented:

*"[The middle classes] made one street look like something from Walt Disney, narrowed down and cobbled, with benches and all that" (Evening News, 17.12.74).*

**Figure 6.2 Islington Borough Council's Maintenance Guide for the Mid-Victorian Villa**



This leaflet sets out to illustrate the common architectural and design features of the mid-Victorian villa, and suggests what features are important to retain, restore and reinstate in order to improve the value of the property and the street.



Jack Walton (1970) a one time resident of Barnsbury, took a walk through the area and commented on how conservation had stultified Barnsbury's character:

*"I walked through the district the other day and noticed that Cloudesley Road had become a sort of promenade with patches of cobblestones jutting out into the roadway; there were park benches and saplings encased in wire cages. It was quiet and peaceful if not to say as dead as mutton...It was not the busy, bustling Barnsbury that I remember when I used to escort a girl friend back to Lonsdale Square, then without a laid out garden and badly in need of a coat of paint...On my walk through Barnsbury I felt shut in and caged off. It was like strolling through a cemetery in which some of the graves were well tended and others not...I shall never return to Barnsbury again. It has become too lifeless, dull, snobby and pretentious; an area of showy houses, sadly lacking the rich, warm throb of humanity".*

The gentrification of Barnsbury has in many ways been defined through its history. For example, Barnsbury was built with a scarcity of mews roads and facilities for stabling horses, therefore it was a more attractive location for the lower middle classes than for the "carriage folk". This feature of Barnsbury's past lives on today, because even in the early days of gentrification Barnsbury sought to attract the less well-off middle classes such as social workers and teachers. On the other hand locations such as Chelsea have historically attracted the richer classes and have continued to do so. In another example, Barnsbury's topography has influenced its architectural design and therein its attractiveness for gentrification. Barnsbury was built on a hill, thought to be the site of a Roman camp, 110 feet above sea level. It was planned following a grid pattern defined by the historic field layout in the area. The hill on which Barnsbury is situated is the second of a set of terraces or steps (the Boyne Hill terrace) which come up from the Thames into north London (Pring,

1968/1969:14). It is significant that the middle classes then and more recently have chosen an elevated position for residential location.

Some of these historical associations have been commodified and marketed in the gentrification of Barnsbury. For example, the reappearance of those long lost vistas for which Barnsbury was so famous a century and a half ago when it was built as a garden suburb. The terraces west of Barnsbury Road blocked the view out to Highgate, but in the laying out of Barnsbury's Barnard Park (during urban redevelopment) on the west side of Barnsbury Road, the view was restored. Also the rebuilding on flattened sites restored views across the canal tunnel site and the demolition of Culpeper Street, Dignum Street and Dewey Road in the 1960s restored part of the gardens of White Conduit Fields (Cosh, 1981:6). In another example of the commodification of historical associations, on Mountford House in Barnsbury Square there is an official plaque (Plate 6.13) which proudly refers to this location as a one time Roman camp. The location was known as Reed Moat Field, myth has it that this location was Suetonius Paulinus's camp at the Battle Bridge when he won victory over Queen Boadicea, yet it was probably just a moat from Barnsbury Manor (Cosh, 1981:21).

Gentrification in Barnsbury has then commodified history as a way of legitimating consumption. Upper Street expresses a neo-archaism of its own. In the mid-1800s it was home to "high class costumiers, corsetieres and mantle makers", it was a "shopping mecca for the fashion-conscious wives and daughters of the wealthy"

(Connell, 1989:2). Then through gentrification this scene was recreated and Upper Street again became a shopping mecca for the middle classes (see previous section on the arrival of the new middle classes). In the 1970s an epidemic of antique dealers located in the area especially around Camden Passage illustrating the importance of historic objectification for gentrifiers in Barnsbury. The Pied Bull pub on Upper Street reveals gentrification's commodification of history. Historically the Pied Bull pub may have been a private house in the reign of Elizabeth 1st, yet it was an inn by 1665, for Daniel Defoe talks of it in "Journal of the Plague Year". The inn was demolished and rebuilt in 1827. In 1988 it was rehabilitated and opened describing itself as "Islington's most stylish local". It sells home cooked food and traditional ales. Its new name became "Sir Walter Raleigh". The old regulars disliked the changes (Connell, 1989:10).

The gentrification of Barnsbury then illustrates the reconstitution of local historical features. These are important in the commodification and marketing of the area. They are constructed as images of security in an "unstable postmodern" London.

In Park Slope the advertizement of property was and is similar to that found in Barnsbury. In many ways the more recent advertizements correspond to the real estate advertizements of the mid-1800s which promoted "sea breezes", "healthful air", "panoramic views from Coney Island to Staten Island and New Jersey" (Muir, 1977:41). Like in Barnsbury, the natural environment and notions of the country-side

within the city are emphasized. A remnant of the days when the brownstones in Park Slope were built as the first suburbs around Manhattan, for example:

*"Charming Proportions and a Warm Country Feel"* (Advertisement by Brooklyn Properties, Inc., October 1991).

The ease of commuting to Manhattan is emphasized in both sets of advertisements, the horse car in the 1800s and the subway in gentrified Park Slope. Properties are advertised as "Victorian Classics", originality is emphasized as much as possible. Images are defined by, for example, stamps like "To The Manor Born" (Advertisement by Brooklyn Properties, Inc., October 1991). A secure living environment is important:

*"An Exciting New Living Environment in the Heart of Historic Park Slope"* (The Phoenix, 27th May 1982, page 19).

Like in Barnsbury, realtors in Park Slope place advertisements in different newspapers and fliers. Rental advertisements are carried in the Wednesday Village Voice, and rental, sales and open house advertisements in the Sunday New York Times;

*"any article that comes out of the New York Times, we've had people quote us for the next month - they did an article once on how you can tell real parquet floors from less good ones by counting the nails. My old manager had someone counting nails in parquet before they would put in an offer. She almost lost her mind!"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

Advertising is an important part of the realtor business:

*"We get our customers because we advertise, most brokers are on 7th Avenue, the main shopping drag. They get more people who just walk by, see a picture in the window, come in. Most of our people we get through advertising, like 90 per cent. Serious buyers follow the ads"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

When asked what she hoped to communicate one realtor answered:

*"Depends on my mood. I'll be perfectly honest with you. I usually do group ads, as opposed to individual spot ads. Like one house each, 3 separates. I tend to try and run a bigger ad physically. Sometimes I put in more location, number of bedrooms; sometimes I go more for a funny opening liner, something that somebody's going to say, 'What did she mean by this?'"* (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).

Like in Barnsbury with reference to the misdescriptions act, realtors in Park Slope said that their advertizements had to avoid "puffing". Puffing is the non-factual or extravagant statements a reasonable person would recognise as such. The line between puffery and misrepresentation is subjective. There are guidelines which the Attorney General in the United States sets out, saying that real estate agents cannot say such and such.

Park Slope like Barnsbury has legitimated and commodified gentrification through historical association. Government legislation has aided the conservation and preservation of Park Slope's brownstones. The Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City was established in 1965 to preserve buildings under the Landmarks Preservation Law (Local law no.46). Their activites include designating, monitoring and preserving buildings and structures, or areas, which are of distinctive value. Park Slope was designated a landmarked area in July 1973 (Plate 6.15), as such special permission is needed to undertake exterior renovations and demolition is made more difficult. The Commission requires documentation in order to provide an area with landmark status, lacking its own staff the Commission relies on those looking for landmark status to document their area (Kasinitz, 1988:170). As such an interested public has to do all the ground work, invariably this means the "concerned" middle classes. Park Slope received landmark status due to the activities of pioneer

gentrifiers and the Park Slope Civic Council. Evelyn Ortner (wife of Everett Ortner) was important in documenting the architecture and history of Park Slope, which had to be sent to the Landmarks Preservation Committee for scrutiny.

The Park Slope Historic District: Designation Report (1973) describes the aesthetics of the area:

*"It's pleasant tree-lined streets and wide avenues, with houses of relatively uniform height, punctuated by church spires, provide a living illustration of the C19th characterization of Brooklyn as 'a city of homes and churches'".*

The architecture in the area is prominent, there are interesting block fronts; basic features include variations in the depth of the front yards, the stone or cast iron railings, the general physiognomy of the buildings whether flush fronted or animated with bays, oriels, turrets, towers, gables or dormer windows (Park Slope Historic District Designation Report, 1973). Architecturally you can buy detail anywhere in Park Slope:

*"You can get it in all price ranges. I mean you can get it on a funky block for \$200,000, you can get it on a grand and glorious block for \$550,000" (Interview with Realtor, Spring 1992).*

Every brownstone in the area is different, for when they were built the design was standardized but then each buyer could choose their own ornamentation. The architectural styles date from the Civil War to the First World War - Italianate, Second French Empire, Neo-Grec, Victorian Gothic, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne or Free Classic, Neo-Georgian/Neo-Federal and some 1920s Art Deco.

According to Slope home owner and community leader John Muir, landmark status,



*"gives credibility to the community's future. There is no chance the Slope could turn into a slum the way there was in the 1960s and 1970s. It gave assurance and it gave confidence to the people. Landmark status was essential to attract newcomers to the area"* (Dorris, 1985:24).

In 1982 Draper (1991:349-350) interviewed Marjorie Thau, a Landmarks Preservation Committee staff member; she said that landmark status was often used as a measure of neighbourhood cohesiveness. Landmark status in Park Slope as in other areas has led to an increase in property values, demonstrating the commodification of historicity, and the profit potential found in neo-archaism. There are though disadvantages to landmark status in Park Slope:

*"None of this is a particular burden to those with capital. For such persons the restoration of the old is either a desirable end in itself or at the very least a shrewd investment. For the poor, however, the situation is far different. If their home is both architecturally and historically important and in need of major repairs, they cannot in most cities tear it down to replace it with a modern structure and they cannot, for lack of capital and lack of skills, restore it. The result is that they eventually sell and leave the area"* (Tournier 1980, cited by Kasinitz, 1988:171).

Like in Barnsbury there was a return to Victorian history in Park Slope, gentrifiers have found security in the solidity and conservatism of the brownstone dwelling. The whole ambience in Park Slope is defined in an historic manner:

*"On the Slope's streets and avenues Summer spins a mood which must be something like that of pre-world war I New York. Children play at games handed down from one generation of youngsters to another...a prosperous looking young man strolls whistling up the boulevard and pauses to watch a pretty au pair pushing a baby carriage...You get the feeling that behind these façades, with their late Victorian complacency, life is solid"* (Feustel, 1978:6).

This neo-archaism is summarized by Gregory Etchison, President of the Park Slope Civic Council:

*"The 'Gay Nineties' once referred to as the golden age of the Victorian era, when American lifestyle seemed clearer, calmer and somehow more romantic. During this fabulous period, many of the opulent and imposing houses of Park Slope were built.*

*Esthetic ideas were realized by the skilled hands of craftsmen, drapers, tile setters and brick layers, with results that were practical to live with and pleasing to see. Well, the Nineties are back. And so is the opportunity to step back in history"* (Etchison, 1990:52:8:2).

Indeed, Park Slope has been described as the world's largest extant Victorian community (Dyett, 1989:38). The Victorian home is in many ways a yearning for the optimism of the modern era:

*"Victorian architecture is a memorial to a dynamic and creative part of U.S. history...an era that saw the country transformed from a rural society to an industrial giant. The houses reflect the same inventiveness, confidence and aesthetic striving that energized the entire period. Victorians saw their house as more than shelter. They were seeking to make the house itself a work of art. To them ornament was not extraneous detail, but rather the refinement that made the home a thing of beauty"* (Labine, 1974:2).

One example of neo-archaic commodification in Park Slope is the gentrified Ansonia Court situated between 7th and 8th Avenues, spanning 12th and 13th Streets (Plates 6.16 - 6.18). It was originally constructed as the Ansonia Clockworks Factory in 1881, as the "ultimate workplace" for the art work of the clockmaker. The design of the building included a lot of daylight for the intricate clock work involved. The factory remained a leader in its field until the 1920s when the competition of new technology and the depression caused it to decline. Today the factory has been renovated and restored to offer 69 apartments with brownstone façades facing a landscaped courtyard. The renovation includes the old wrought iron tie braces, wood beams, exposed brick walls, cobblestone walkways and the massive interior courtyard which now contains a garden of approximately one third of an acre. D. Kenneth Patton of Helmsley-Spear, the director of the project, stated that: "Ansonia Court represents the art of urban living" (The Brownstoner, 1982:13:4:7). The apartments

were marketed at a price of \$100,000 each. Through commodification and various marketing strategies Ansonia has been reinterpreted within a new realm of urban living and a new form of urban architecture. Part of Ansonia's style can be described as kitsch, "the daily, everywhere art of our time" (Lendler, 1975:16), an attempt to combine class and art. The aesthetic exploitation of an everyday object, a factory, to communicate social distinction.

Another example of the commodification of property with different uses into residential property are the Atrium Buildings in Sterling Place between 6th and 7th Aves. Originally the buildings were the old carriage houses and stables which belonged to the Maxwell Mansion which was demolished in the early 1920s (The Brooklyn Eagle, February 4th, 1922). Later the buildings became an automobile auction centre and a garage. In April 1981 the Arker and Simon Partnership, principals of the Sterling and Fleetwood Company bought the buildings, and gutted, reconstructed and transformed them into a sculpture studio and spacious apartments. They became known as the Atrium Buildings because a skylight-covered, landscaped atrium is the most distinguishing feature of the project. A sense of history was important in the project:

*"This is an area with a definite, almost palpable feel to it...it has tree lined streets and row after row of brownstones of great character. This is a neighborhood with roots, and I think more and more people are being attracted to that...Although the Atrium buildings were never residential buildings, they do have roots of their own in 'The Slope' as deep as their brownstone neighbors" - Sol Arker, the developer, (Daniels, 1982b).*

Historical associations are important for Park Slope, "Park Slope is a living museum, albeit a museum without walls" (Muir, 1977:Preface). Many of the street names have virtuous historic references, named in a wave of post Civil War patriotism; for example, Montgomery Place named after the revolutionary hero, Carroll Street named after Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Lincoln and Union Streets where the reference is more obvious. The eclecticism found in Park Slope's architecture has historical associations, it stems from the fact that the brownstones were built around the time of the 1893 "World's Colombian Exposition" held in Chicago (Park Slope Historic District Designation Report, 1973), which caused a new eclecticism to sweep the country. One example is the Montauk Club, composed of Venetian Gothic and American Indian themes. In the area eclecticism is evident in the combined usage of Ionic, Composite and Corinthian columns on some of the houses (Plate 6.19). In another example, at 28 Prospect Park West at Montgomery Place (Plate 6.20), a plain building with a great roof includes stone gargoyles and griffins, diamond designs, steep shaped gables, tall chimneys and dormers, also an intricate fleur-de-lis top.

The fact that Park Slope, like Barnsbury, is located at an elevated position, makes the area attractive for the middle classes. Like in Barnsbury, Park Slope's elevation has important historical references. In the revolutionary war of August 1776 Prospect Park and the adjacent Park Slope became the site for the first major battle between the Continental Army under Washington and the British Army in North America after the declaration of Independence. Prospect Park was part of a chain of wooded hills

which stretched to Jamaica, these hills were seen by an English newspaper on August 17th 1776, as: "already by nature very advantageous and defensible" and used by General Washington as a defense lookout for Brooklyn and then New York against the British (Park Slope Historic District Designation Report, 1973).

But historical associations in Park Slope are not just external features. The insides of many of the brownstones are,

*"...equally well preserved, with all their fantastic Victorian spoolwork, curlicues, parquet patterns, and built in glassdoored china cabinets just as they were some eighty years ago - an art nouveau paradise" (Stanforth and Stamm, 1972:65).*

Sometimes the juxtaposition of the historical and the contemporary appears as peculiar in gentrified Park Slope. For example, a historic brownstone with a modern day swimming pool or a barbeque in its back yard. Also the contemporary health food craze is reflected in the organic vegetable gardens found in the hidden back yards of brownstones. And the energy efficient movement which builds solar panels into historic property, for example, 201 6th Avenue between Union and Berkley.

All these features reveal both Barnsbury and Park Slope to be landscapes of cultural consumption. A reflection of the arrival of the new middle classes, their desires and tastes, and a reflection of the commodification and marketing of the past;

*"historic building and district classifications have greatly contributed to 'opening up' the vernacular to a broadly defined upper middle class. So have restaurants, gourmet groceries and stores that sell artisanal or artist-designed products. These amenities lure consumers with cultural capital, i.e. the experience, education and time to seek them out..." (Zukin, 1992a:202).*



The differences in the commodification of Barnsbury and Park Slope associated with gentrification are symptomatic of their differing historical associations and urban ideologies. In Chapter 7 I go on to offer some conclusions about the contextuality of the gentrification process.

## 6.6 Local Narratives

Finally, I want to conclude with two highly descriptive local narratives, one from Barnsbury and the other from Park Slope. These localized texts illustrate the contextuality of the gentrification process, but equally importantly they reveal that:

*"There is a continuity and a wholeness in the life of a community which the dividing of its story into chapters obscures. Divisions based on periods of time, geographical areas or fields of activity tend to conceal the interrelationship of all. Even outstanding events are part of the pattern, the result and cause of other events"* (Hay, 1972:20).

Firstly, a local narrative associated with gentrification in Barnsbury -

Harris who once lived in Barnsbury (1974:206-209) provides an interesting local narrative about the gentrification of his locale:

*"Nothing astonished me more, when Barnsbury was transforming itself, than to see Ripplevale Grove in a glossy monthly, photographed at angles to show off the iron work and the eaves. Scarcely Cheltenham, it had an admitted pre-Victorian charm, and quiet...I went back at long intervals. Barnsbury Road brooded potently. Gone was the taxi driver who tossed his wife out of the window, gone his son who thought us rich. Passed, I think were the all night parties, the excruciating 'vamped' pianos. The sleazy grans and skipping girls and vicious little sex machines were gone, with the Irish lodgers and railwaymen and actors dressers. Apart from the shopkeepers sons, who went away to school, and played chess, my friends had inherited a vocal socialism with an aggressive illiteracy. They had entered a pre-patterned adulthood and I was cast out...I saw photographs, at clever angles, in the Queen I read of the middle class seeking dialogue with the natives. I was sceptical of there being any working-class natives in this quintessentially middle-class suburb; migrants, they had moved on in the thirties to the congenial estates of Becontree and Barnet".*



Harris takes a stroll through Barnsbury and comments on what he sees:

*"Here was the corner of Barnsbury Road. There were traffic rails. The ultimate squalor had come. I knew it was the end. I turned the corner. Barnsbury Road was flattened. Street upon pretty street, 10 or 20 acres, were gone. They had left a few balconied houses",*

he walks further on to the Albion public house,

*"...and there was the shrill debby laugh of someone who, croos her heart, had got her picture full-page in the Tatler. Someone called Snap with Country Life".*

Harris finds going back to Barnsbury very disturbing:

*"The word traumatic is overdone, but what other fits some moments. It was too much for one night. Hurrying away, past the chic little antique shops, the oyster-shell inlays and spinning wheels, the Francis Bacon prints and T.V. scripts of Malvern Terrace, I think I first decided to write this letter in exorcism".*

And finally, a local narrative associated with gentrification in Park Slope -

Jan Hodenfield (1986) a journalist for the Daily News, describes gentrified Park Slope and talks to some of the locals:

*"On a balmy evening along Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue, a few blocks distant from the commotions of Flatbush Avenue, romance is in the air. A young couple flirts. She possibly 15 and decidedly pretty, sits on top of a trash dumpster, dividing her attention between the Chihuahua in her lap and the boy standing eye-level with her knees.*

*They could be on a Caribbean beach. Or Dayton, Ohio; it's that peaceful. Even the halogen floodlights in the supermarket parking lot across the street cast a serene glow on their distractions.*

*Which is noteworthy because less than five years ago on this stretch of Fifth Avenue you made sure to move quickly. Unless you were one of the men warming your hands over trash can fires, you did not dawdle about these bombed-out, boarded-up, burned-out buildings.*

*The first 10 blocks of the avenue, from Flatbush to Union Street, were a fierce landscape of urban blight, the wrong side of the tracks - and then some - of increasingly stylish Park Slope, a neighborhood once again being mentioned in the same breath as Brooklyn Heights.*

*Two blocks up is yuppie heaven. 'All they talk about,' says one longterm resident of the newcomers who now stride purposefully down Seventh Avenue, 'is real estate and restaurants'....*

*In the end, it may have been shopping-cart gridlock in the one supermarket in all of the Park Slope, up on Seventh Avenue that tipped the scales. The post-pioneers had not paid \$200,000 for living quarters in order to spend their Saturdays doing seething dances of slow death in the soiled aisles of a dinky supermarket. After much community pushing and pulling, a second Key Food, this one with Muzak, opened on the Baltic Street Lot at the end of 1983.*

*With aisles three carts wide and parking spaces for 109 cars, backed up by 44 new three-family row houses on the remainder of the lot, the 29,500 square feet emporium is the crown of the avenue's re-creation, its mix of customers a galaxy of races and classes.*

*'It's a really nice outlook', says Vinnie [store owner in Park Slope], 'a lot of new faces passing by, the ladies with the baby carriages, children riding on bicycles - and you never saw that, parents were afraid to send their children out to play...*

*'It seems like the neighborhood is coming back to what it was', he [Michael Eugenio, store owner] says, 'and I'm really looking forward to living here, there's a lot of friendly people around. It looks good'".*

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION: A MORE SENSITIVE ANALYSIS OF GENTRIFICATION

### 7.1 Introduction

*"In a plural(ist) world any conclusion is inevitably inadequate, and that offered here is no exception"* (Rosenau, 1992:167).

The question to be asked in this conclusion is whether theoretical pluralism and contextualism serve only to shatter the bases of analyses of gentrification so far, or whether they hold out any hope for bringing the fragments back together in a revealing and more sensitive manner.

Firstly, I offer some conclusions about plurality. Secondly, I consider contextuality with reference to the idea of an Atlantic Gap between gentrification in London and New York. And finally, I offer some conclusions about the relationship between plurality and contextuality, and how these two notions render more sensitive analyses of gentrification.

### 7.2 Theoretical Pluralism

I have undertaken a pluralistic analysis of gentrification by juxtaposing marxist and postmodernist interpretations of the process. Both their complementarities and productive tensions have been observed.

Certain facets of the marxist and the postmodernist frameworks were found to be mutually constitutive when I investigated gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

Therefore in terms of the complementarity between marxist and postmodernist interpretations of gentrification, I conclude that in certain instances,

*"Two languages:  
As of the soul,  
As of the cell,  
Take it in turn;  
In new pages  
Each other spell"<sup>51</sup>*

This supports my argument in Chapter 2.3, that the dichotomy between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification is not as sharp as the literature would have us believe.

I draw out two points: Firstly, the notion of the global city in the marxist framework is complementary to the transition from modernity to postmodernity in the postmodernist framework. The move from industrial capitalism to financial/service capitalism is inherent in both sets of explanation. This illustrates how postmodernist explanations of gentrification adopt marxist economic interpretations of the process. Secondly, the rent gap and the value gap used in the marxist framework are complemented by the demand from the new middle classes in the postmodernist framework. Both interpretations are mutually constitutive. The rent gap and the value gap are structural and economically determined conceptualizations. In the case of the rent gap just because the uneven development of capital opens up an area for gentrification does not mean that the opportunity will be exploited. In analyzing the arrival of the new middle class we get closer to understanding why and how the

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<sup>51</sup> From part II of the poem "Complementary Complementarities" by Richards (1972:162-169).

potential ground rent is manufactured. Their desire to live in the inner-city is explained, as are the differences between pioneer gentrifiers and later gentrifiers. The pioneer gentrifiers wanted to attract capital into their area, but did not want to be driven out by it. Image was an important part of the potential ground rent: Park Slope was imaged as an urban frontier, and brownstoners were imaged as idealistic adventurers. Moreover, potential ground rent increased when Park Slope was designated as an historic district. Gentrifiers in Park Slope organized house tours, which are an overt way of exploiting the potential ground rent. Here we find that the humanist part of the postmodernist framework provides human agents to activate the potential ground rent. Similarly, in terms of the operation of the value gap in Barnsbury, the desires and activities of the new middle class from the postmodernist framework help explain vacant possession value.

Now I want to go on to illustrate some of the productive tensions between the marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification, and to argue that investigating these tensions should sensitize analyses of gentrification.

There is a productive tension between marxist conceptualizations of class and postmodernist conceptualizations of the new middle class. Part of the productive tension between economically and culturally determined explanations of class associated with gentrification, is that between the rigidity of marxian explanations<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Despite attempts to alleviate the rigidity of marxist class analysis geographers generally revert back to a relatively rigid two-class analysis (see Chapter 2.2.2).

and the ambiguity of postmodernist explanations. The class struggle associated with gentrification cannot be adequately encapsulated in a two-class model. In both Barnsbury and Park Slope there were complicated class demarcations: it was not always the local working class versus the middle class gentrifiers. Some working class locals wanted their neighbourhood to be gentrified, some "gentrifiers" did not want their neighbourhood to change any more, but wanted to retain a social mix in their area. An acceptance of the ambiguity of class identity in postmodern society is important, and is at odds with a modernist conceptualization of class such as that offered by marxist analysis. This kind of tension between two explanations of gentrification produces a situation where class analysis must be reformulated and the conceptualization of marxist class analysis must be questioned. For the neighbourhood is no longer the critical site of class reproduction, the postmodernist explanation of gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope reveals class consciousness to be somewhat ambiguous. The pioneer gentrifiers especially, but also in Park Slope many of the later gentrifiers, had more of an interest in cultural values than economic value, a social mix and liberal community appeared to be more relevant than property values. This stands in direct contrast to the supposed economic interest of the marxian bourgeoisie. In Barnsbury and particularly in Park Slope class consciousness has been diluted in gentrification by the importance of other forms of difference. Barnsbury was part of the "People's Republic of Islington". In Park Slope the lesbian community has developed a "gay consciousness", and realtors identify the "mommy class" which signifies another kind of cultural and reproductive consciousness. Indeed, the marxist two-class model can be blamed for perpetuating the class-ridden



nature of many analyses of gentrification, and for the lack of attention to the geographies of difference inherent in gentrification.

A consideration of class is not the only productive tension between the marxist and postmodernist explanations. The old structure versus agency debates are still apparent, a reflection of the humanistic threads found in postmodernist explanations of gentrification. Whilst the structural characteristics of capital are seen to produce gentrification in the marxist framework, the politicization of interest groups and the activities of the new middle class are seen to instigate gentrification in the postmodernist framework. The tensions between structure and agency need to be rethought, not in general terms, but with specific reference to processes of gentrification.

There are then a variety of complementarities and productive tensions between marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification, these invalidate singular theoretical explanations of the process.

In the next section I discuss contextuality to question the validity of universal explanations of the gentrification process.

### **7.3 Contextualism**

I have undertaken a contextual analysis of gentrification by juxtaposing London and New York and investigating whether an Atlantic Gap is operative between

gentrification in the two cities. Both the similarities and differences between gentrification in London and New York have been observed.

Although there are certain factors, without which gentrification may not have taken place, there are a variety of contextual differences between Barnsbury and Park Slope. This has led me to argue that there is an Atlantic Gap operating between the instances of gentrification in London and New York.

Firstly, I want to look at some of the similarities. In the production dominated explanation of gentrification (the marxist framework), there are a number of commonalities between gentrification in London and New York. It seems that inner-city devalorization was an essential pre-requisite for the gentrification process in Barnsbury and Park Slope. Processes of disinvestment were similar in both cities; suburbanization, landlord neglect, a high incidence of vacancies and processes of red-lining were common in Barnsbury and Park Slope.

Secondly, in the consumption dominated explanation of gentrification (postmodernist framework) there were also a number of similarities. The globalization of culture has formed very similar gentrified, consumption landscapes on both sides of the Atlantic. Middle class food and clothes outlets, brass door knockers and carriage lamps indicate similar consumption patterns in both areas. The commodification of historical associations in the landscapes of Barnsbury and Park Slope have been important, epitomized in the appropriation of Victoriana in both neighbourhoods. The State in

both Barnsbury and Park Slope has offered finance and designated conservation areas thus legitimating acts of neo-archaism. These findings are important for a number of reasons, not least because they illustrate transatlantic cultural reproduction. This conclusion has been strengthened further in work that compares gentrification in London, New York and Paris (Carpenter and Lees, 1994) and finds that the consumption landscapes associated with gentrification in all three cities are similar. Gentrification is then an expression of the globalization of culture in a postmodern world, an example of how a process that allegedly aims to express difference, ultimately results in a degree of global conformity.

Despite these similarities there are many important differences between gentrification in London and New York. These differences demonstrate the operation of an Atlantic Gap between instances of gentrification in the two cities. Firstly, I concentrate on the rent gap and the value gap, and then I look at some other features which render gentrification in London and New York different.

Differences in property law and ideology between London and New York are an important part of the Atlantic Gap. In the United States the concept of real estate is related to land, whilst in Britain it is related to property. It is this difference which makes the value gap a more appropriate theorization of gentrification in Barnsbury and the rent gap in Park Slope, because the value gap is more concerned with property values and the rent gap with land values.

The rent gap is place specific<sup>53</sup>. As social status increases in a neighbourhood so does the potential ground rent (see Smith, 1979a). If the actual ground rent is low the rent gap widens thereby facilitating gentrification. Value gaps on the other hand operate over wider spaces because government policy and economics affect tenure forms in a city or region (Clark, 1991a:21). As the rent gap is more place specific this makes it more usable for analyzing gentrification in New York as opposed to in London, for in general the "sociologically bounded" neighbourhood is a more prominent feature of Park Slope than of Barnsbury. The spatial constitution of a gentrified community is more elusive in Barnsbury than in Park Slope. In Barnsbury there is a larger percentage of public or socialized housing which stands in the way of gentrification (although this is changing in some areas as housing originally built for council tenants, but since sold into owner occupation comes up for resale) and of gentrification's social boundary formation. Barnsbury was only to gentrify within certain limits, these being spatially and socially defined by the distribution of council housing, especially the Barnsbury Estate to the south-west of the area, and by the smaller enclaves of council houses within the neighbourhood.

Moreover, legal and political differences between the London and the New York housing systems and legislation, makes the value gap appear to be a more relevant theorization of gentrification in Barnsbury as opposed to Park Slope. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, when gentrification was in its pioneering phase, rent regulations in England played a decisive role in the process, the 1957 Rent Act was a

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<sup>53</sup> Indeed Smith (1987b:464) admits that we need to be sensitive to the constitution of place.

turning point. In Barnsbury creeping decontrol enabled the winking of tenants and the sale of buildings to developers and/or individuals who would then gentrify the property. A similar Act and associated processes were not operative in New York at this time.

I also argue that the rent gap and the value gap are differentially relevant because the abandonment which occurred in Park Slope and which is an important feature of the rent gap, was not commonly associated with Barnsbury. In Park Slope white flight to the suburbs was allied with black immigration, in which processes of disinvestment and abandonment were followed by landlords. A similar process was not evident in Barnsbury at this time, where a post-war housing shortage minimized abandonment.

The investigation of an Atlantic Gap between gentrification in London and New York has revealed that the rent gap and the value gap are more relevant as explanations of gentrification within the city contexts in which they were theorized. As such care must be taken in applying the two constructs universally.

There are other differences between gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope. Although gentrification began in both neighbourhoods in the late 1950s, the process was more rapid and spatially conclusive in Barnsbury than in Park Slope. The main decade of gentrification in Barnsbury occurred after the 1957 Rent Act, from 1961-1971. The main decade in Park Slope was much later, 1973-1983. This difference can be associated with the dates of anti-red-lining policies in both cities. The 1967 Open

Mortgage Scheme in England and the 1977 Federal Community Reinvestment Act in the United States. Gentrification was more rapid and spatially conclusive in Barnsbury due to rapid tenurial transformation in inner London at this time. The scene in Park Slope was quite different; tenurial transformation was slow and less important, although it became more significant with coop and condo developments in the 1980s. Gentrification has been less spatially conclusive in Park Slope due to the stable enclaves of hispanic, and Italian and Irish working class. Gentrification is only now very slowly pushing into these areas, notably the South Slope.

Examination of the postmodernist explanation of gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope also reveals some differences alongside evidence of the globalization and reproduction of culture, which cast doubt on modernity's universalistic project (see Featherstone, 1993:172). The style of gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope is different. In Barnsbury conspicuous thrift dominates whilst in Park Slope external ornamentation is characteristic. This difference is a reflection of the appropriation of differing Victorian aesthetic ideologies. Moreover consumption in Park Slope has an added ethnic dimension: the black middle class prefer larger rooms and the property to be in better condition, than the white middle class. The culturality of Barnsbury and Park Slope differs. Gentrified Barnsbury is dominated by a predominantly white and left of centre population, whereas Park Slope is dominated by a "grown up flower power" population, alongside some very well off yuppies on the park blocks. In Park Slope "difference" is an important part of the image of the neighbourhood. The gay (especially lesbian) community is culturally and politically expressive in Park Slope.



There are gay people in Barnsbury as the setting up of a gay dating agency reveals, but they are not as community based, nor culturally expressive as in Park Slope. The relationship between the 1960s yippie and the 1970s yuppie<sup>54</sup> is relevant to Park Slope, where flower power associations have been adopted into the gentrification process (see Chapter 3.3.2).

There are then a variety of similarities and differences between gentrification in Barnsbury and Park Slope. The differences reveal important contextualisms which invalidate universal explanations of the gentrification process. This conclusion supports Giddens' (1984) argument that there can be no general theories of place, and Warf's (1993) argument that explanation must be tailored to the unique characteristics of places. It also supports van Weesep (1994:8) who argues that:

*"Gentrification is deeply rooted in social dynamics and economic trends. Its signs, effects and trajectories are to a large degree determined by its local context; the physical and the social characteristics of the neighbourhoods in question, the positions and the goals of the actors, the dominant functions of the city, the nature of economic restructuring and local government policy".*

#### **7.4 Gentrification is Complex**

I conclude that singular theoretical analyses and universal explanations of gentrification underplay the "chaos and complexity" of the process (Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986). They move too quickly from specific instances of gentrification to

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<sup>54</sup> Jerry Rubin was a yippie, a member of the counter-cultural Youth International Party, a hippie organization. Rubin was one of the Chicago Eight convicted for instigating anti-Vietnam riots in Chicago in the late 1960s. Rubin is now a yuppie in that he has adopted the values of Wall Street. This story explains some of the flower power associations and cultural values in Park Slope (see Whimster, 1992:316-321).

broad statements about gentrification in general. This thesis reaffirms the diverse character of gentrification and insists that it can only be understood by analytical sensitivity to alternative theorizations of the process and to specific local contexts. Moreover, a recognition of the complexity of the process invalidates many of the definitions of gentrification and perhaps even the term itself. The term "gentrification" was coined in London and as such has English class based associations, but it is used universally. The term "brownstoning" on the other hand is used to describe the same process in the United States, but is inappropriate as a universal definition. Like the rent gap and the value gap, definitions of gentrification and labels for gentrification are context dependent. The result is that the term gentrification is not necessarily an appropriate label for the process in Park Slope, and brownstoning is certainly not an appropriate label for the process in Barnsbury. The concern then should be for the appropriateness of labels and explanations of gentrification and the information which they allude to, as well as the information which they neglect.

Context is not only important in revealing that gentrification has many country, city and locality specific traits; it also reveals that some theorizations or conceptualizations are less useful out of their own context. Indeed some singular theorizations are only useful in the local contexts in which they were produced and cannot be used to explain gentrification in general. The locality or context in which a theory is developed obviously dictates the elements used in that theory. For example, I have argued that Smith's (1979a) rent gap and Hamnett and Randolph's (1984,1986)

value gap are only useful for understanding gentrification in the contexts in which they were theorized.

Finally, the answer to the question posited at the opening of this conclusion is that the consideration of pluralism and contextualism in this thesis has not shattered the bases of analyses of gentrification, but what it has shattered is the adherence to singular theoretical constructs and universal meta-narratives. Separately marxist and postmodernist explanations of gentrification only offer parts of the story, together they offer a more sensitive analysis. The differing contexts of gentrification found in London and New York and the confirmation that an Atlantic Gap exists, means that universal theorizations of the process neglect important insights.

I follow McLennan (1989:258) who argues:

*"I have maintained that it is not the decisive replacement of outworn criteria by fresh insight which will mark social theory in the coming period, but rather the relatively inconclusive jostling of theoretical traditions, the scrambling of ground rules for comparison and assessment, and the oscillation between post-modernist disruption and modernist retrenchment".*

This thesis illustrates the jostling between two explanations of gentrification (see Figure 7.1), it compares and assesses theoretically and contextually, and it oscillates between post-modernist disruption and modernist retrenchment. But, this thesis departs from McLennan's argument in that it is **not** inconclusive. I conclude that a consideration of pluralism and contextualism are the ways forward to produce more sensitive interpretations of the gentrification process.

Figure 7.1 Brownstone Brooklyn: A Place for all Reasons

Page 17, PHOENIX, October 2, 1978

# THE PHOENIX MAGAZINE

## BROWNSTONE BROOKLYN:

### A Place For All Reasons:

#### Lifestyle

A wealth of lifestyles harmoniously co-exist in Brownstone Brooklyn. White collar, blue collar, artist, shopkeeper, free lancer, corporate executive — all live side by side diversely in apparently homogenous rowhouses. See Page 18.



#### Economics

For many people, the bottom line of brownstoning makes fiscal sense. But getting to that point often means checking on mortgaging and financing, calculating the potential from income apartments, a do-it-yourself-as-much-as-possible approach to renovation and surveying the investment value. See page 25.



#### Culture

The lively arts are very lively in our part of town. BAM, The Brooklyn Philharmonic, Chelsea Theater, and The Brooklyn Museum, along with a host of community theater groups, co-op art galleries and informal musical ensembles keep culture-goers and doors hopping. See page 30.



#### Aesthetics

Brownstone Brooklyn has a monopoly on charm, variously described as European, historic and human-scale. It's architecture, and tree lined streets make for an urban oasis amid canyons of asphalt and towers of concrete. See page 21.



#### Expanding Horizons

The Brownstone Movement is on the move. What started in the downtown neighborhoods is spilling over into contiguous areas where a second wave of pioneering renovators and restorers are carving out Brooklyn homesteads. See Pages 31 and 32.



#### Brownstone Fair

Know-how is a plentiful commodity in Brownstone Brooklyn. Professional services abound on every aspect of city living — from finding a house to fixing the roof. See page 34 for those exhibiting at the Brownstone Fair, set for the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, 195 Montague St., Oct. 4, 10 am to 4 pm, Oct. 5, noon to 4 pm.



#### Sense of Community

Belonging feels good. In Brownstone Brooklyn, block associations, street fairs, helpful neighbors and an enduring sense of comradeship lick the problems of isolation and anonymity that marks other urban living. See Neighborhood Testimonials throughout Magazine.



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## **APPENDIX 1 FIELDWORK SOURCES**

### **A1.1 New York City**

(i) Census data on population and housing 1950-1990 was attained from the New York City Census Bureau.

(ii) I visited Chuck Emrich the chief economist on New York City at the Port Authority of New York, where I attained a variety of economic reports providing data on New York City as a global economy, and answers to some questions which I had previously prepared in an informal conversation which was not taped.

(iii) I visited the New York University Real Estate Library where I attained, firstly, realty sales records for Park Slope 1986, 1989, and 1991 (giving type of building, price and mortgage type), and secondly, literature on American and specifically New York real estate practices and terminology.

(iv) I visited the New York City Planning Department and located the following reports from the Misland data base; a) a lot by lot listing of the number of cumulative quarters and dollars in arrears for certain selected years, b) a summary of the number of vacant buildings in selected years 1969-1990, c) the year a certain building was first observed vacant by taxlot, d) sales prices 1981-1990, and, e) unoccupied housing units by year and census tract 1981-1990. I also attained a variety of City Planning publications portraying New York City from the 1970 and 1980 census data, and some City Planning studies which specifically analyzed the Park Slope area. Informal conversations, again not taped, were also important.

(v) I joined the Brooklyn Historical Society, in so doing I gained access to both contacts in Park Slope, and to literature in the Society. For example, the Park Slope clippings and neighbourhood files, and relevant newspapers and magazines 1950 to 1992, i.e. The Phoenix, The Brownstoner, The Civic News, The New Brooklyn Quarterly, The Old House Journal. The Society also provided historical, economic and architectural references for Park Slope and Brooklyn, alongside references on the American ideology of the home and property.

(vi) In the Brooklyn Public Library I studied another Park Slope clippings file.

(vii) In the New York Public Library I had access to references from the library catalogue and the social science index catalogue. Various newspapers and magazines were available including, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Village Voice, The Wall Street Journal, Urban Life, and, New York Magazine. In the economic and public affairs section of the library, I attained economic profiles on Brooklyn and New York City, including many publications from the Municipal Research Institute.

(viii) I visited Philip Kasinitz an urban sociologist living in Park Slope and currently researching gentrification in the adjacent Boerum Hill. I contacted Susan Draper an anthropologist who also lives in the area, and has researched gentrification in Park Slope from an anthropological point of view.

## **A1.2 London**

(i) I collected all the 1951-1991 census data, at borough, ward and enumeration district level. Some of this was attained from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) in Kingsway London, the rest I collected from Islington Borough Council.

(ii) I contacted Trevor Bull and Michele von Ahn of Islington Borough Council's (IBC) Planning Department. Here I spent a number of weeks collecting census data I had not collected from OPCS. As the enumeration districts are not the same in each census year, I selected five areas from the 1961-1991 maps which approximated each other in terms of enumeration district coverage (Figure 4.7). These are located throughout the Barnsbury area. The five locations are Thornhill Square, Barnsbury Park - Barnsbury Street, Barnsbury Square, Gibson Square/Almeida Street, and Cloudesley Road. I attained some areal statistical profiles on the Barnsbury area which IBC had undertaken for Islington Special Area 3, in 1966. I also gained information, historical and present on Barnsbury as a conservation area from IBC. Reports published by IBC on Islington, i.e. borough development plans, community plans and housing and economic fact packs were collected. Informally, I talked to members of IBC, some of whom had lived in Barnsbury during the early days of its gentrification.

(iii) I collected government, Greater London Council (GLC) and economic reports on London as a whole from the Guildhall Library. Background literature on the development of London was widely available.

(iv) I went to Colindale to access the London and British newspaper collection. Here I collected articles and real estate advertizements on Barnsbury, focusing specifically on the Islington Gazette, Evening Standard, Islington Chronicle, The Times and Time Out Magazine. I collected a profile of sales prices for Barnsbury property from the 1950s to the 1990s.



(v) At Islington Central Reference Library I contacted Mrs. Hart the local studies librarian who provided me with all the Barnsbury clippings files and a wealth of other information on Barnsbury and Islington.

(vi) I contacted Halifax Building Society which provided me with tables of regional historic house price figures 1973-1992.

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- Plate 4.2 A free standing villa, Barnsbury
- Plate 4.3 Barnsbury Square, Barnsbury
- Plate 4.4 Lonsdale Square, Barnsbury
- Plate 4.5 Cloudesley Square, Barnsbury
- Plate 4.6 Milner Square, Barnsbury
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- Plate 4.12 Grand Army Plaza, Park Slope

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- Plate 6.11 Stoop Sitting, Park Slope
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Plates 6.16 - 6.18 Ansonia Court, Park Slope  
Plate 6.19 Eclectic Columns, Park Slope  
Plate 6.20 28 Prospect Park West, Park Slope

PLATE 4.1



PLATE 4.2



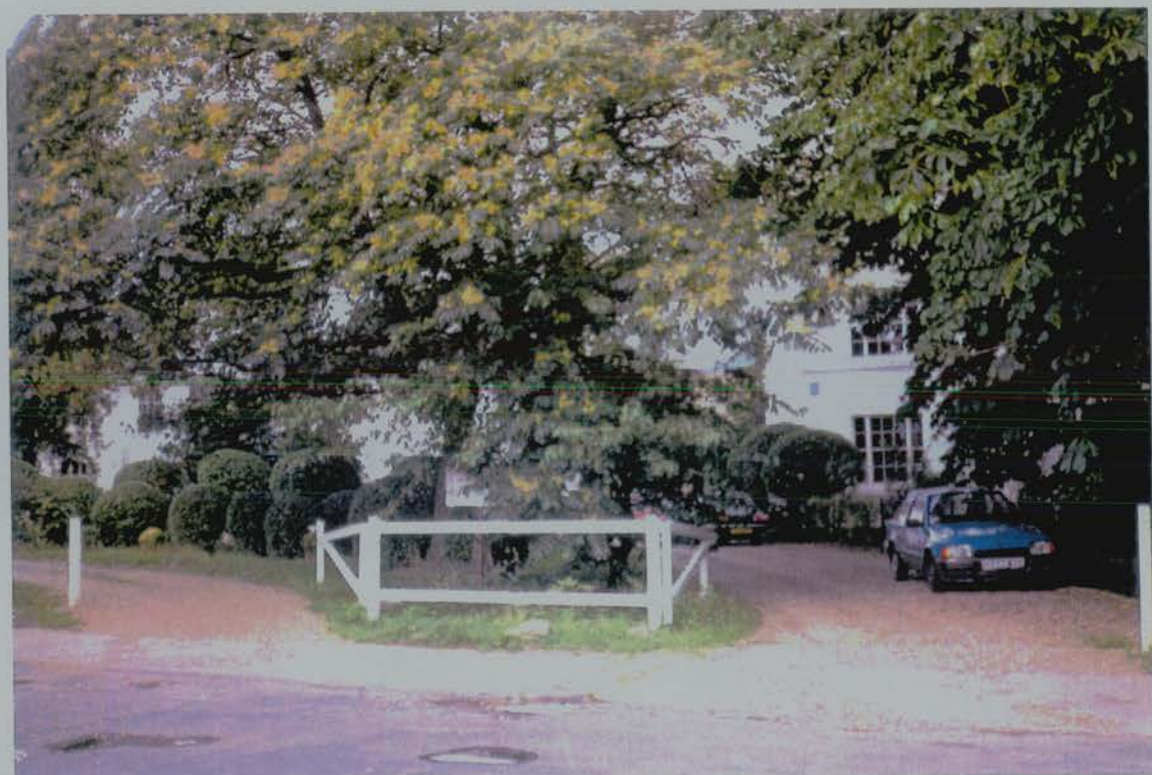


PLATE 4.3



PLATE 4.4



PLATE 4.5



PLATE 4.6





PLATE 4.7



PLATE 4.8





PLATE 4.9



PLATE 4.10



PLATE 4.11

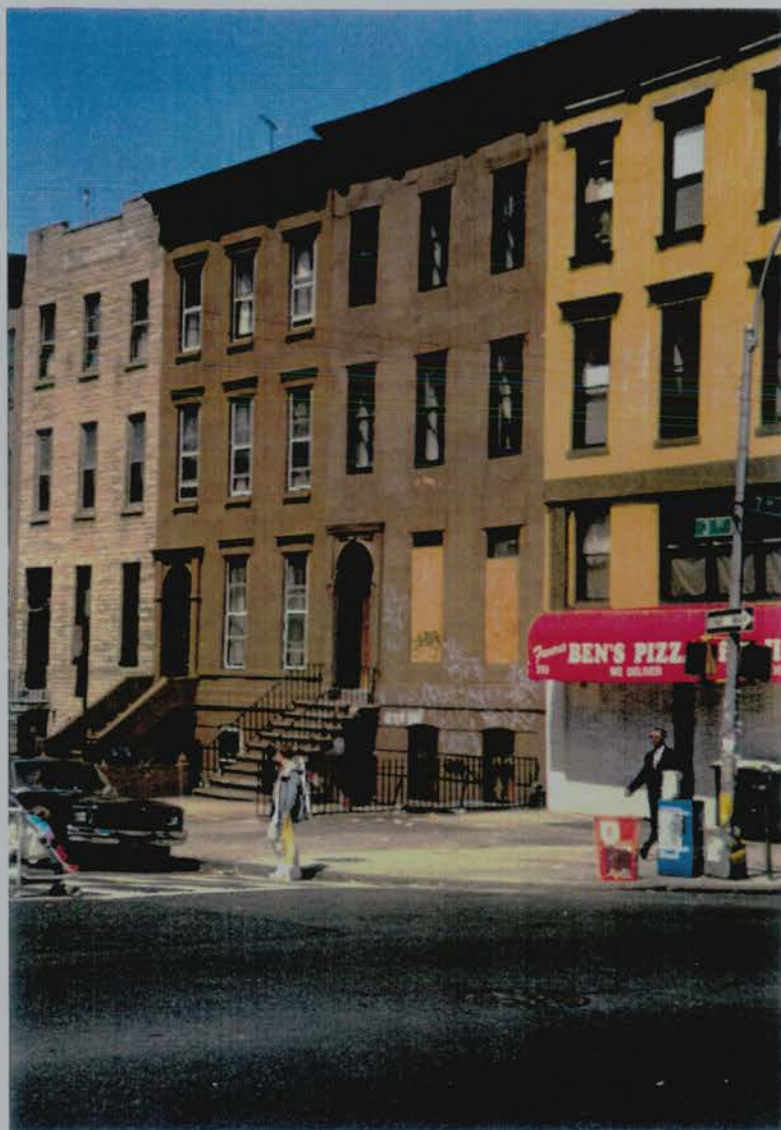


PLATE 4.12



PLATE 5.1





PLATE 5.2



PLATE 5.3

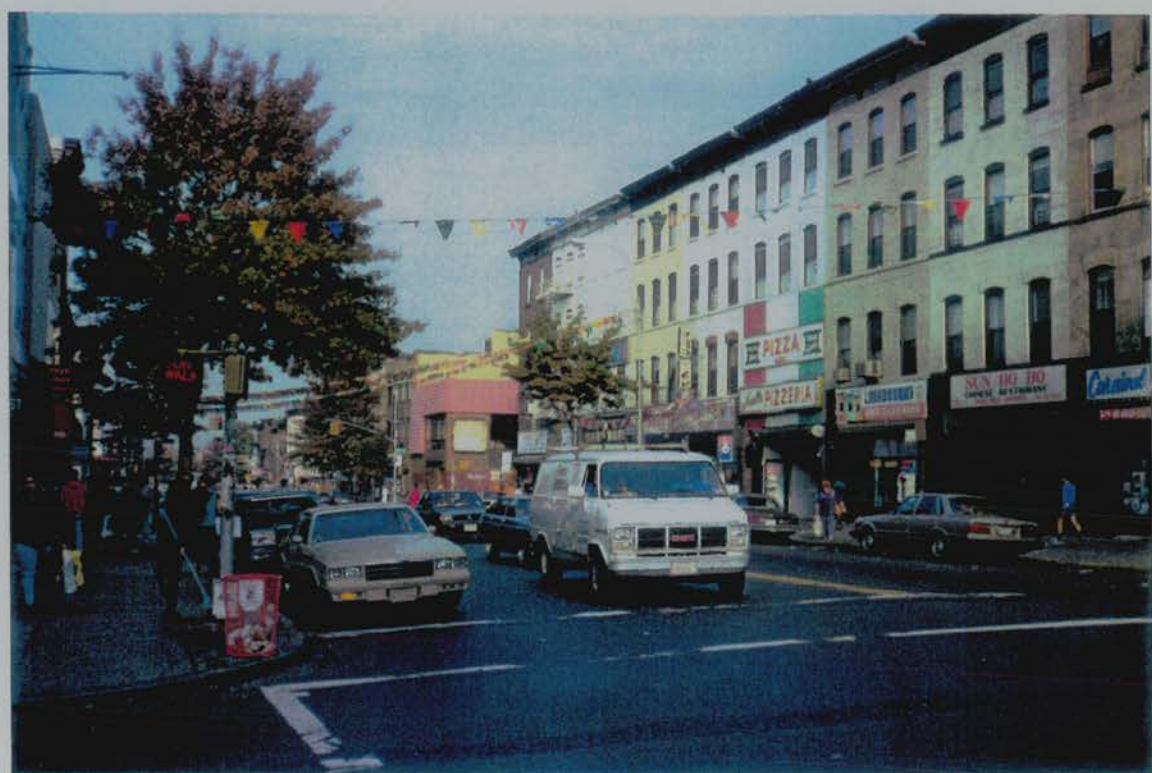


PLATE 5.4





PLATE 5.5



PLATE 5.6



PLATE 5.7



PLATE 5.8





PLATE 6.1

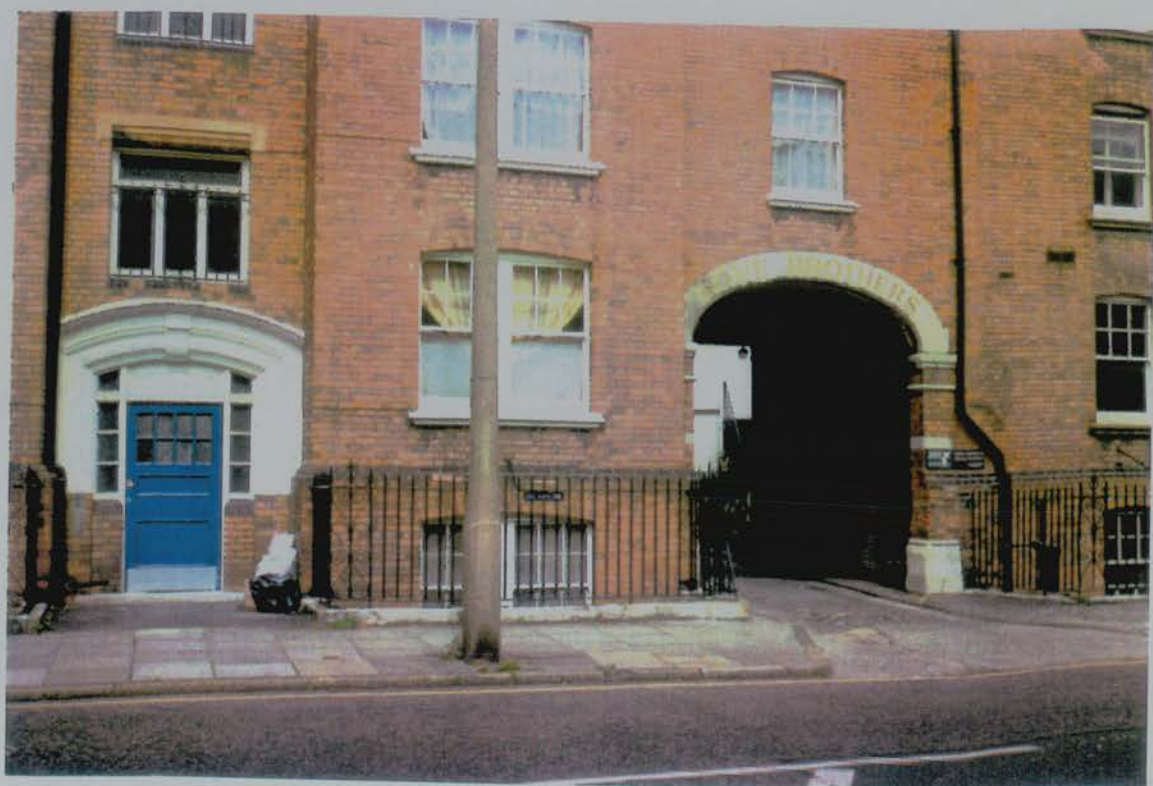


PLATE 6.2



PLATE 6.3



PLATE 6.4





PLATE 6.5



PLATE 6.6





PLATE 6.7



PLATE 6.8



PLATE 6.9



PLATE 6.10





PLATE 6.11



PLATE 6.12



PLATE 6.13



PLATE 6.14

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PLATE 6.16





PLATE 6.17

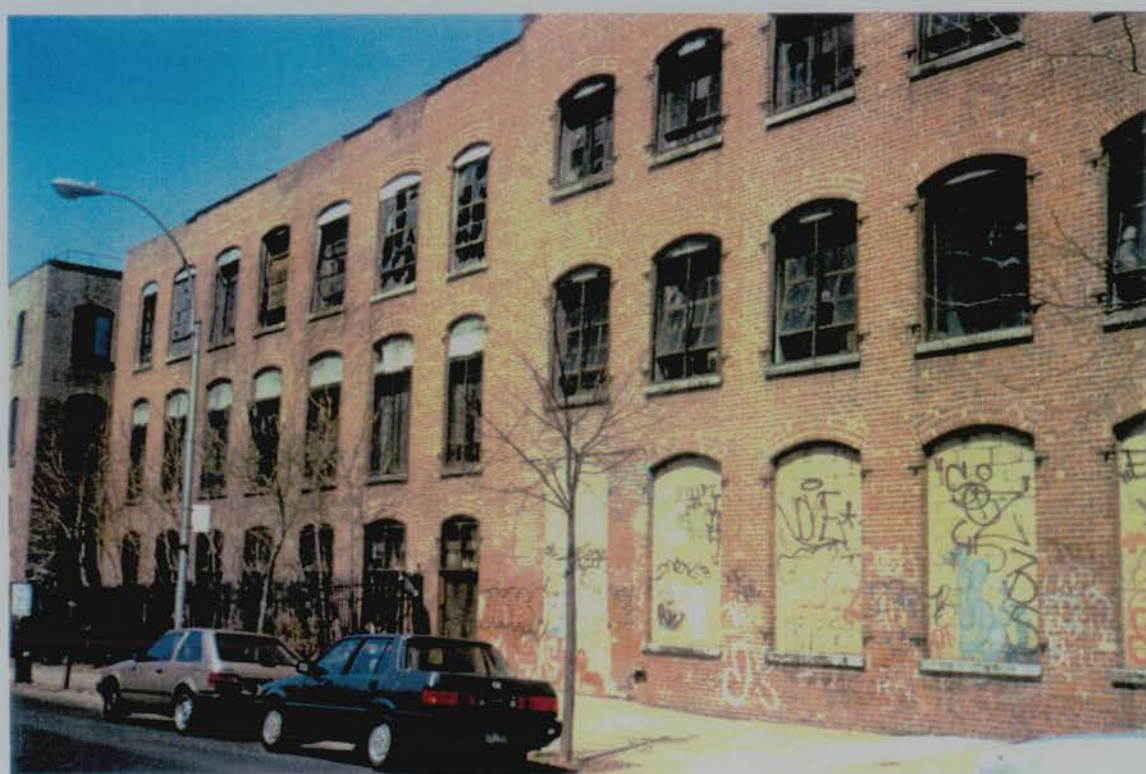


PLATE 6.18





PLATE 6.19

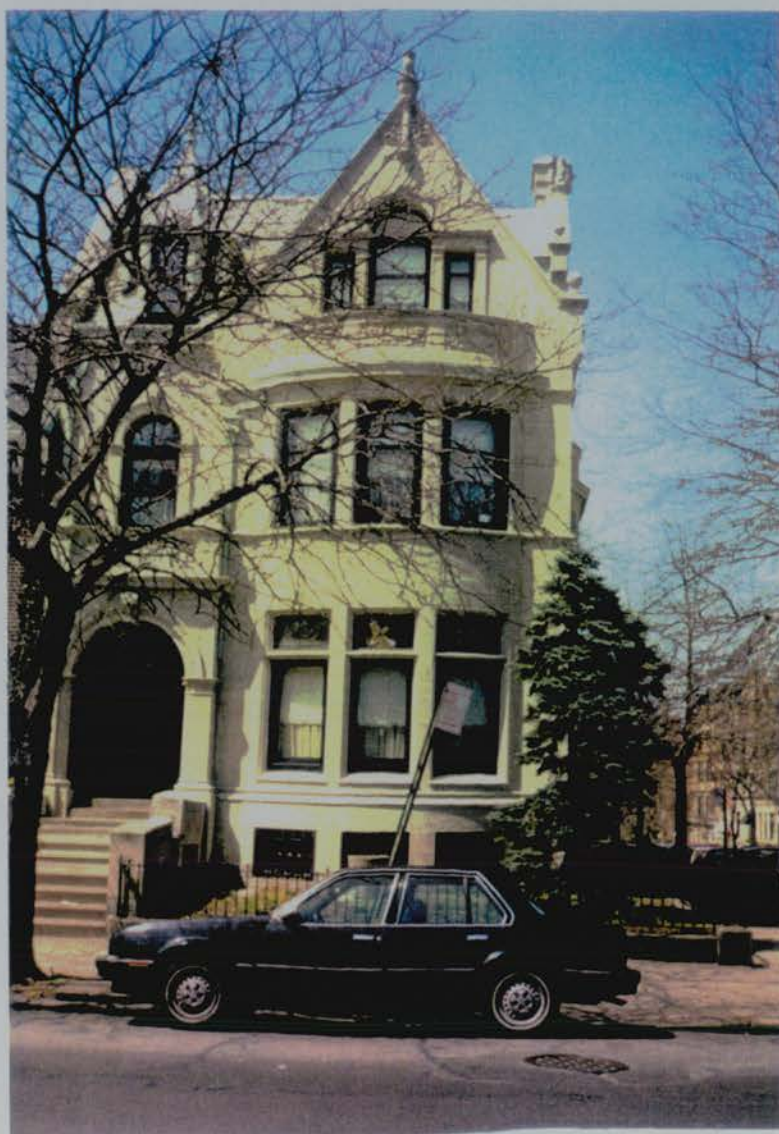


PLATE 6.20

### **APPENDIX 3 PUBLICATIONS**

A3.1 Gentrification in London and New York: An Atlantic Gap?, *Housing Studies*, 1994, Volume 2:199-217.

A3.2 Rethinking Gentrification Beyond the Positions of Economics or Culture, *Progress in Human Geography*, 1994, Volume 2:137-150.

## Gentrification in London and New York: An Atlantic Gap?

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**ABSTRACT** *This paper is concerned with differences and similarities between gentrification in England and the United States. The central argument is that processes of gentrification are context specific. Three aspects of local contexts that are crucial to gentrification are explored: (1) the institutionalisation of property transfer; (2) the capitalisation of property, and (3) urban conservation practices. These are illustrated with reference to two examples of gentrification: in Barnsbury, part of the inner London borough of Islington and in Park Slope, part of the Brooklyn borough of New York City. The analysis demonstrates that differences between the English and the US land and housing markets and urban conservation practices have important effects on the gentrification process, and that concepts which are relevant in one national setting are not necessarily appropriate in another national setting.*

### Introduction

Writers on gentrification have been arguing for some time that gentrification could be quite different depending on its location:

events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historical surroundings lead to totally different results (Badcock, 1984, p. 12).

With few studies concentrating on the specifics of context writers are still reaching the same conclusions (see Musterd & van Weesep, 1991, p. 12).

One way of understanding the significance of context is to study the phenomenon comparatively. Those international comparisons which have been offered (e.g. Gale, 1984; Palen & London, 1984; Williams, 1986; Zukin, 1992) have neglected to focus on all three levels which make gentrification context-specific: locality, city and nation. Gale's (1984) suggestions are more useful than his analysis:

To overemphasise the conditions of revitalisation would be to ignore critical historical, geographic and political distinctions, many of which, although fading with the passage of time, still impose variations to be recognised (Gale, 1984, p. 143).

The term 'gentrification' is itself contextual; it was first used by Glass (1964, p. xviii) with reference to processes observed in London:

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest

mews and cottages ... have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period—which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation—have been upgraded once again ... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.

A similar process was soon recognised in the US and elsewhere where it was given the same name. But is the process of gentrification the same in American cities as it is in London?

This paper aims to assess whether there is an Atlantic Gap in the operation of gentrification. To do so I examine the setting, background, conditions and framework in which gentrification processes are situated. The notion of context is applied at three levels—locality, city and country. At times the three levels operate in harmony, at times their relationship is more ambiguous, so that they must be treated as separate, and not inter-changeable levels of analysis.

I use three issues to illustrate the relationship between gentrification and context. These are taken from Glass' (1964, p. xviii) definition of gentrification, and they have become widely used in existing analyses of gentrification. Glass (1964, p. xviii) argues that gentrification occurs in London when property "leases have expired" (see also Hamnett & Randolph, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988; Hamnett & Williams, 1979, 1980). Therefore in the first section, I examine the institutionalisation of property transfer, comparing property law and the land and housing markets in London and New York. Glass (1964, p. xviii) also argues that buildings "have become elegant, expensive residences." In the second section, I examine the capitalisation of property in terms of investment and profit (see Hamnett, 1973; Dugmore & Williams, 1974; Zukin, 1982; Smith, 1986). Lastly, Glass (1964, p. xviii) notes that Victorian houses are upgraded to their former splendour (see Clay, 1979; Zukin, 1982; Maher *et al.*, 1985; Jager, 1986) so in the third section, I examine conservation practices and ideologies in London and New York.

### *Case Study Areas*

London and New York are readily comparable as two global or world cities and as two metropolises. A global or world city is a city in which there are multinational functions such as finance and banking services which operate across the world; for example, shares in companies can be traded in financial centres all over the world 24 hours a day (Budd, 1992, p. 264). A metropolis is a chief city and centre of activity, often a capital city. Within each city one locality has been selected for this study: Barnsbury in London (Figure 1), and Park Slope in New York City (Figure 2). In both cases processes of gentrification can be traced to the 1950s. Thus, both exemplify early occurrences of gentrification and both can be characterised today as examples of 'mature gentrification'.

Barnsbury is a residential neighbourhood in the borough of Islington two miles from the centre of London. It is an area of terraces and free-standing villas. Barnsbury was laid out in the 19th century as a middle class suburb covering



**Table 1. Tenorial transformation 1961-81**

| Thornhill Square | 1961<br>(Per cent) | 1971<br>(Per cent) | 1981<br>(Per cent) |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Private Rent     | 68                 | 82                 | 26                 |
| Owner Occupation | 10                 | 16                 | 40                 |
| Council Rent     | 0                  | 0                  | 18                 |
| Other            | 22                 | 2                  | 16                 |

| Barnsbury Square | 1961<br>(Per cent) | 1971<br>(Per cent) | 1981<br>(Per cent) |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Private Rent     | 80                 | 77                 | 12                 |
| Owner Occupation | 15                 | 22                 | 50                 |
| Council Rent     | 0                  | 1                  | 28                 |
| Other            | 5                  | 0                  | 10                 |

Source: 1961,1971,1981 Census.

Note: Private Rent category includes furnished and unfurnished private rented property.

manorial land. It went into gradual decline, becoming an area for the working classes, and declining more rapidly during the Second World War. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the middle classes began to return and in the 1970s Barnsbury became a conservation area.

Park Slope is a residential neighbourhood in Brooklyn, four miles from Wall Street, Manhattan. It is an area of brownstones and row houses. A brownstone is a building (usually from the late 19th century) constructed of or faced with a soft grained triassic sandstone which weathers due to the presence of hematite iron-ore. It was one of the earliest middle class suburbs of New York City built in the mid to late 19th century. Park Slope deteriorated into an area of rooming houses during the Depression. In the 1940s and 1950s the area was dominated by Irish and Italian Americans. Gentrification began in the 1950s and 1960s. Today the area is home to one of the largest lesbian communities in the United States and to families from a now 'grown up' flower power generation.

**Table 2. Percentage change in socio-economic grouping 1961-71**

|                   | Professional/<br>managerial | Non-<br>manual | Skilled | Semi/<br>unskilled |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------|--------------------|
| Barnsbury Ward    | + 12.5                      | + 6.4          | - 10.8  | - 8.1              |
| Thornhill Ward    | + 4.5                       | + 5.9          | - 10.4  | - 0.7              |
| Pentonville Ward  | + 5.8                       | + 7.3          | - 4.3   | - 8.8              |
| Islington Borough | + 4.9                       | + 4.3          | - 7.4   | - 1.7              |

Source: 1961,1971 Census.



### The Institutionalisation of Property Transfer

This section examines the property law that structures the land and housing markets so crucial to the process of gentrification. I also examine the contextual differences associated with land and property law and ideology, which render the two concepts the rent gap and the value gap differentially relevant.

The ownership of, and struggles over, land and property are the elements on which gentrification is hinged during its 'redifferentiation' of geographical space. I demonstrate in this section, that property law is quite different in England and the US, with important consequences for processes of gentrification.

#### *Property Law and Gentrification in England and the US*

In the US when a person purchases a house or an apartment s/he also purchases the land or an interest in the land on which that house or apartment block stands. In the US property owners hold the exclusivity of property rights. In England the landholding system differs between freehold and leasehold property. In the case of a freehold property both the land and the building are owned outright by the purchaser. In the case of a leasehold property the resident is effectively a tenant in somebody else's property and on somebody else's land. S/he does not own the land or building but purchases the right to use them for a specified period. Leaseholds generally run for 99 years. At the end of that time the property reverts back to the freehold landlord.

In Barnsbury lease reversion assumed a particular importance for the gentrification process. Different properties in the area belonged to different landowning estates and their leases closed at different times, depending on when the estates were built. The Stonefield Estate was the oldest built in 1825, the Thornhill Estate was the newest built between 1848 to 1852. The leases from the older estates owned by aristocratic or institutional landlords folded between 1920 and 1940. These owners sold their freeholds to private landlords because ground rents which had been high in the 19th century had been eroded by 20th century inflation, because the landowner's capital was tied up and yielding no return, the security of tenure had been extended to lessees, and the big freeholders were being condemned as slum landlords. It was the new freeholders, the private landlords, who were to profit from the flat break-up in central London after 1966, when private rented flats were sold into owner occupation and gentrification. Developers and private individuals waited in anticipation. The *London Property Letter* (February 1970) circulated amongst estate agents referred to Barnsbury as a "healthy chicken ripe for plucking" (Ferris, 1972, p. 42; *Barnsbury Peoples Forum News*, May 1975). However, the more recent Thornhill Estate leases closed later than the others. Thornhill's leases closed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when these properties were also sold to private landlords. As a result of the later lease reversions and therefore later purchase by private landlords, private rent also declined much later in the Thornhill area than in the rest of Barnsbury. Indeed private rent was still increasing 1961-71 in Thornhill, when elsewhere in Barnsbury it was rapidly decreasing (see Table 1). As a result gentrification came to the Thornhill area later than to the rest of Barnsbury, and the flat break-up market was less important:

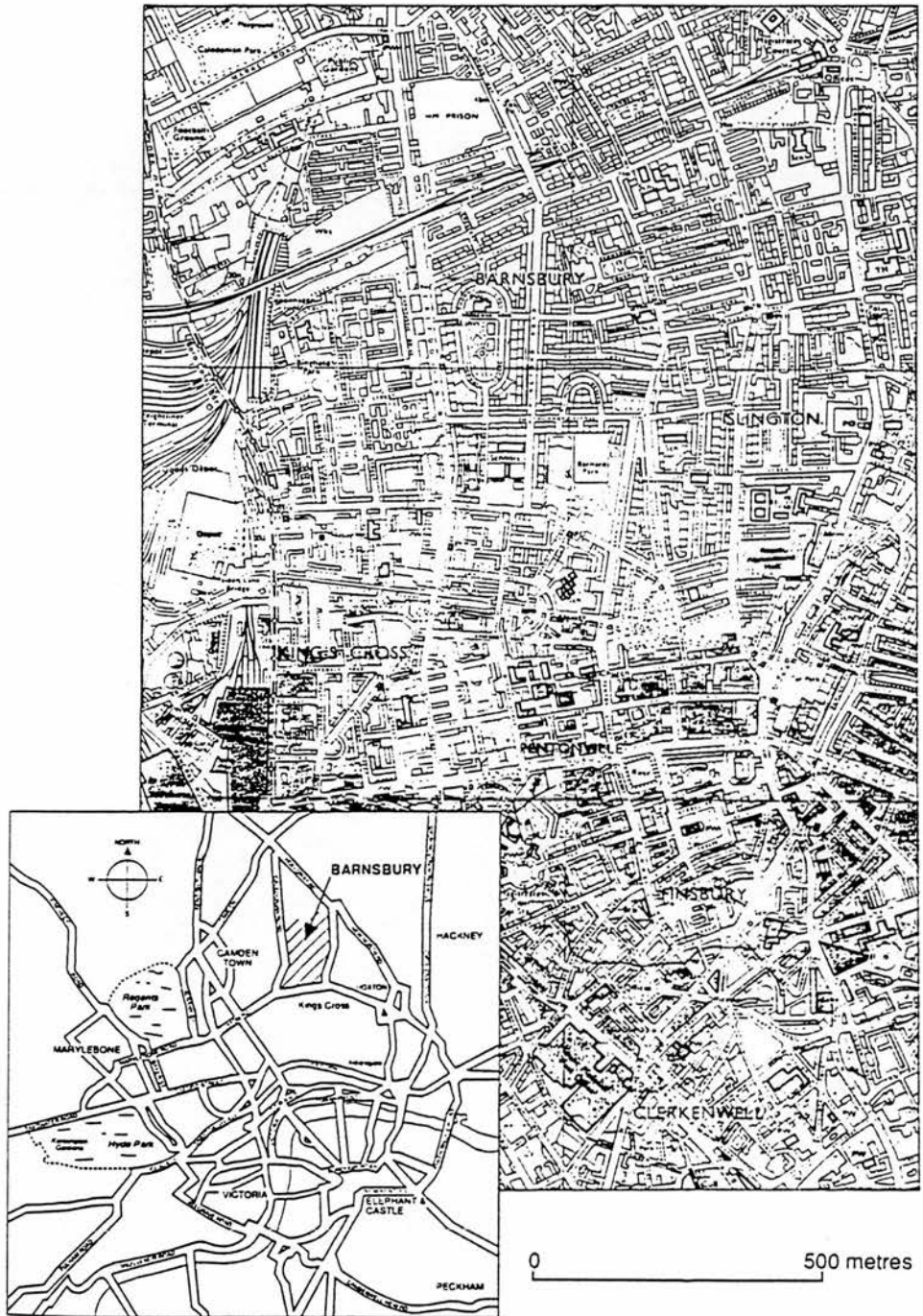


Figure 1. Barnsbury, Islington, North London

Areas with the best prospects now are the cheaper terraces of Barnsbury, like Hemingford Road, Thornhill Square and Thornhill Road, which missed out on the earlier price rises (Bartholomew, 1971, p. 189).

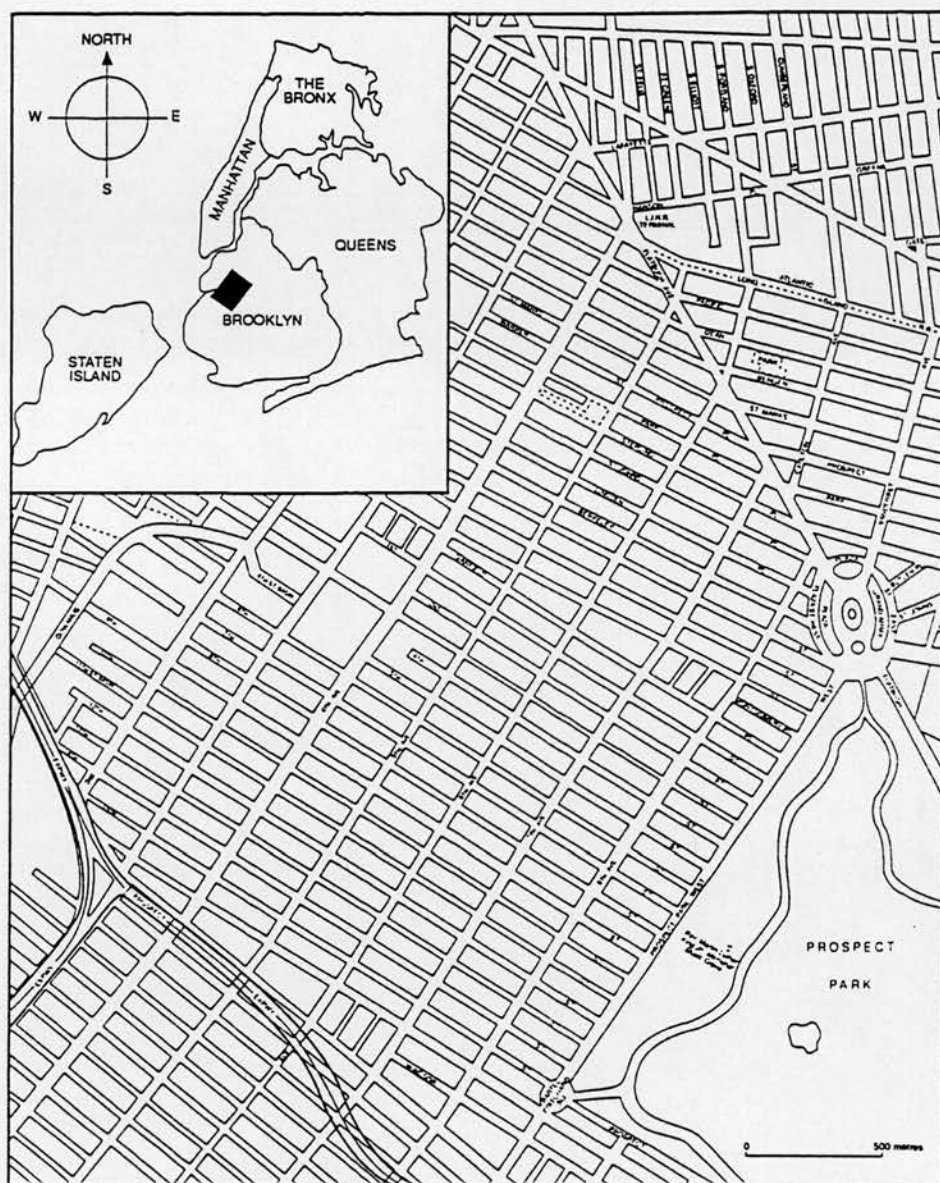


Figure 2. Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York City

Table 2 shows that during the 1961 to 1971 period the Barnsbury ward had increased its professional and managerial population by almost 13 per cent, the Thornhill ward was lagging far behind other parts of Barnsbury with an increase of only 4.5 per cent.

In Park Slope gentrification has not been affected by a leasehold system. In the US property owners have a more direct control over their land and property

because they own their land and property outright. American freehold land tenure enables the liberalism and possessive individualism associated with gentrification in the US. Indeed, gentrification in Park Slope has further increased individuals control over their land and property through the tenorial transformation (through renovation and rehabilitation) from private rent, warehouses or factories to condominiums (condos) and co-operatives (co-ops).

Condos and co-ops are a democratic form of land and property ownership, for under US property law co-ops and condos are designed to combine communal living with communal ownership (see Figure 3). When a building is 'converted' into a co-op, it is sold by the owner to an apartment corporation. The entire building, or group of buildings, is then owned or leased by the co-operative corporation. In a co-op people do not buy their individual apartments, but buy a number of shares in the corporation allocated to that particular apartment. Important factors in determining how many shares each apartment has include number of rooms and the location and size of each unit. Ownership of the shares entitles the purchaser to a long-term proprietary lease for the apartment (*The Brownstoner*, 1981, p. 12).

The condo form originated in 1961, when the US Congress passed Section 234 of the National Housing Act which provided a legal model of condo ownership. When a building is converted into condo ownership the whole building is strata-titled: the buyer buys the apartment itself, plus an undivided interest shared with the other apartment owners in the common areas and facilities, including the land on which the building stands, the lobby, stairways, hallways, heating, electrical and mechanical systems. There is no intermediary corporation and no proprietary lease for each apartment. The buyer owns the apartment and may obtain a mortgage to finance its purchase. All of the apartment owners are responsible for a proportionate share of the cost of fuel, the payroll for building employees and other charges for operating the building. These costs are known as common charges. Unlike a co-op shareholder, each condo owner is directly responsible for a share of the real estate taxes on the entire building based on a proportionate interest in the common areas (*The Brownstoner*, 1981, p. 12; van Weesep, 1987).

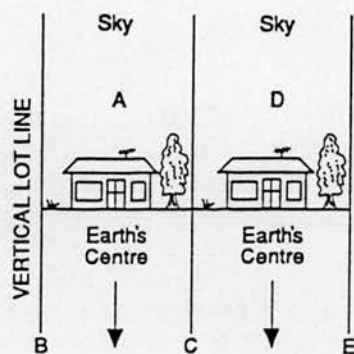
I have looked at the legal framework of property transfer in London and New York and have argued that the gentrification process has been influenced by different forms of property law across the Atlantic. I want next to look at the theorisations of the rent gap and the value gap for these also relate to the institutionalisation of property transfer in terms of land and property law and ideology. I illustrate four arguments about the differential relevance of the rent gap and the value gap for analysing gentrification in London and New York.

#### *The Rent Gap and the Value Gap*

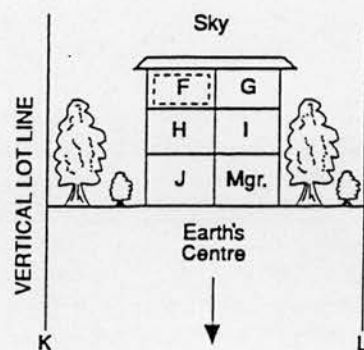
The rent gap theorised by Smith (1979) relates to the devalorisation of capital so that the ground rent under present land usage is substantially lower than the ground rent that could be realised if the land was put to a different use. When the gap between the actual ground rent and the potential ground rent is large enough, reinvestment in the form of gentrification may occur.

The concept of a value gap developed by Hamnett & Randolph (1984, 1986) is based on the difference between a property's "vacant possession value" and its "tenanted investment value". The former is a measure of the property's

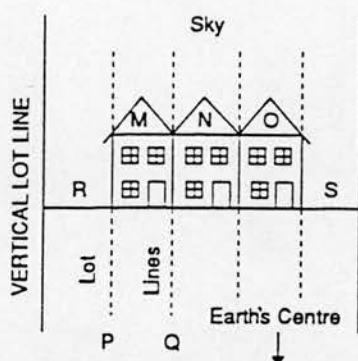




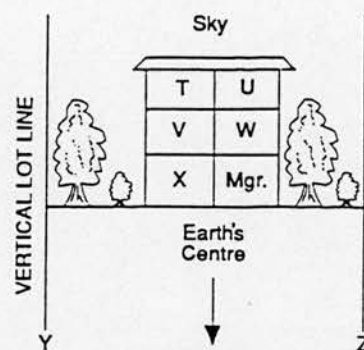
1. HOUSE



2. CONDOMINIUM



3. TOWNHOUSE



4. CO-OPERATIVE

Figure 3. Condominiums and co-operatives and their legal definition.

Notes: 2. Condominium: The owner of F owns the space inside the dotted lines. Except for F,G,H,I and J's air spaces, they all own an undivided interest in everything between lot lines K and L, this includes the land, the shell of the building, the elevators, the lobby, etc. 3. Townhouse: In Park Slope the brownstones are predominantly townhouses. The owner of house M owns the land between lot lines P and Q from the centre of the earth skyward. 4. Co-operative: All the land and building between lot lines Y and Z are owned by a corporation that is owned by the shareholders T,U,V,W and X.

Source: New York Real Estate, 1981, p. 450.

future sale price when it is converted into owner occupation, and the latter is a measure of the rented building's annual rental income. The values of both are often similar, but when demand for owner occupied housing increases, the gap between the two values is likely to widen, especially if rent controls prevent landlords from increasing rents. Under these circumstances landlords are attracted by the profits they could gain by turning their property over to owner occupation.



Clark (1991a,b) illustrates the complementarity of both in an analysis of the Swedish housing market, but here I argue for the theoretical separation of the rent gap and the value gap. Their complementarity may be relevant in Sweden, however, the differences in property law in England and the US suggests that the two concepts are not equally relevant in all contexts. As I now explain, property values are the important factor in England, whereas land values are the important factor in the US.

#### *Property Law and Land Ownership*

The concept of real estate in the US is directly related to land rather than to property:

Real estate is land and the improvements made to land, and the rights to use them (New York State Realtors, Inc., 1981).

In England property owners may not own the land on which their property is situated due to an undemocratic landholding system (see Massey & Catalano, 1978, pp. 54–68), as such the dwelling itself is more important—the Englishman's home is his castle scenario. Or as Hamnett & Randolph (1988, p. 254) suggest, "An Englishman's home, if held on a leasehold, is his landlord's castle" (citing Julia Eaton, 1983).

I argue that the value gap is a more appropriate theorisation of processes of gentrification in England than in the US because the value gap is more concerned with property values:

the disparity between the value of a BUILDING in a vacant state and its value with a sitting tenant, whose contractual rights are likely to have a negative impact. The value gap is subject to government regulation of tenant rights (Musterd & van Weesep, 1991, p. 12),

and the rent gap with land values:

for devalorisation leads to physical decline, which in turn lowers the market price of the LAND on which the dilapidated buildings stand (Smith 1982, p. 149).

The devalorisation which lowers the price of land in the operation of a rent gap is associated with the process of abandonment, to which I now turn.

#### *Abandonment*

I also argue for the separation of the rent gap and the value gap because the abandonment which pervades US cities and which is an important feature of the rent gap, is not commonly associated with English cities. England did not experience a post-war, state-funded, suburbanisation programme which increased inner-city abandonment, as did the US (see Sternlieb *et al.*, 1974; Bradford & Rubinowitz, 1975; Dear, 1976; Smith, 1991). Moreover a post-war housing shortage in England minimised abandonment. In the US white flight to the suburbs was allied with black immigration to inner cities in which processes of disinvestment and abandonment were followed by landlords. A similar process was not evident in England at this time.

*The Rent Gap is Place Specific*

As social status increases in a neighbourhood so does the potential ground rent (see Smith, 1979). If the actual ground rent is low the rent gap widens thereby facilitating gentrification. Value gaps on the other hand operate over wider spaces because government policy and economics affect tenure forms in a city or region (Clark, 1991a, p. 21). As the rent gap is more place specific this makes it more usable for analysing gentrification in the US as opposed to in England, for in general the sociologically bounded neighbourhood is a more prominent feature of the US city than the English city. The spatial constitution of a gentrified community is more elusive in England than in the US. In England there is a larger percentage of public or socialised housing which stands in the way of gentrification (although this is changing in some areas as housing originally built for council tenants, but since sold into owner occupation comes up for resale) and of gentrification's social boundary formation. Barnsbury was only to gentrify within certain limits, these being spatially and socially defined by the distribution of council housing. In Park Slope there is no public or low income housing.

*Property Law and Tenurial Transformation*

Finally, I argue that legal and political differences between the London and New York housing systems make the value gap appear to be a more relevant theorisation of English than US gentrification. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, when gentrification was in its pioneering phase, rent regulations in England played a decisive role in the process. The 1957 Rent Act attempted to alleviate the property neglect caused by low rents which were enforced due to rent controls and restrictions. A block decontrol of rents occurred. A landlord could give a controlled tenant six months to quit or could increase their rent. If a controlled tenant died or moved out the letting would become decontrolled. It enabled a block decontrol of rents in all dwellings with a rateable value of over £40 in London and £30 elsewhere in England (see Milner Holland Report, 1965, pp. 248–249). Creeping decontrol enabled the 'winkling' of tenants and the sale of buildings to developers and/or individuals who would then gentrify the property. 'Winkling' refers to the process of tenants being forced to leave their homes by bribery or harassment. In Barnsbury when vacant possession value became higher than tenanted investment value 'winkling' occurred and the vacated property was sold. A landlord named David Knight was accused of being Barnsbury's Rachman. Peter Rachman was an unscrupulous landlord operating in London in the 1960s. When one of Knight's tenants reported him to the rent tribunal, he turned off the electricity, locked her out, threw out her belongings, bolted the door, libelled her and threatened to shoot her (*The Sunday Times*, 1970).

A similar process was not evident in New York at this time, despite Hamnett & Randolph's (1988, pp. 244–248) claim that condominium conversion in the US is a function of the same value gap that caused the tenurial transformation from private rent to owner occupation in inner London. The background was the same: a distressed rental market, an increase in the demand for owner occupation and the favourable tax treatment of owner occupiers. Further, they find that where condo conversion has occurred it is usually associated with a low

level of abandonment. Yet I would argue that gentrification in Park Slope has been associated with a strong element of abandonment and rent arrears. Many of the buildings which were converted into condos (or co-ops) were low class rooming houses which had been abandoned in the 1970s when they had become unprofitable. Discussing the gentrification of Park Slope in the 1960s and the 1970s, O'Hanlon (1982, p. 200) identifies 1976 as the year with the highest percentage of tax arrears (7.1 per cent). That condo and co-op conversions began in 1977 (NYC DCP, 1985, p. 12) cannot be considered a coincidence. Between 1977–84 applications were filed for 130 conversions, this made up 21 per cent of the applications in the borough of Brooklyn as a whole. There are examples of condo conversion without the previous abandonment of the building, but in Park Slope and in New York in general (see Smith *et al.*, 1989) abandonment, tax arrears, the rent gap and condo conversion are more closely related than Hamnett & Randolph suggest.

Hamnett & Randolph (1988, p. 251) further claim that condominium conversion as an example of the value gap at work was mobilised quickly in the US due to an absence of tenant protection legislation. But I argue New York did not have an absence of tenant protection legislation. A study by the City of New York in 1964 (see Milner Holland Report, 1965, pp. 219–222) found that 77 per cent of the City's 2 million rented units were rent controlled, another 5 per cent belonged to the public authority. Moreover security of tenure was protected by law, unlike in England. Therefore with landlords and tenants getting a supposedly better deal in New York, landlords were not as ready to sell up as in London, and private renting in New York in particular and the US in general did not decline to the extent it did in London and England.

In this section I have argued how differences in property law and tenurial transformation make the context for gentrification dissimilar in London and New York. I have illustrated four reasons why the rent gap is a more appropriate theorisation of gentrification in the US and the value gap a more appropriate theorisation of gentrification in England. As such I have recovered a variety of evidence for the operation of an Atlantic Gap in terms of the institutionalisation of property transfer.

During gentrification the transfer of property is directly associated with profit-making, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **The Capitalisation of Property**

This section aims to show how the capitalisation of property operates differently in different contexts. The capitalisation of property relates to Smith's "frontier of profitability",

The frontier line today has a quintessentially economic definition—it is the frontier of profitability (1986, p. 20).

The notion of investment connects the institutionalisation of property transfer discussed in the first section with ideas on the capitalisation of property addressed in this section.

The investment potential of property can be seen in the rise in property values associated with gentrification. These appear to be much the same in England and the US. For example in Barnsbury, London, a house in Lonsdale Square was bought for £9000 in 1966, sold for £18 000 in 1969, and was offered for £35 000



in 1972 (Power, 1972, pp. 3-4). This same house would cost upwards of £200 000 today. In Park Slope, New York City, the 1960 average price of a residential building was \$15 620 (Source: 1960 US Census); in 1970 it was \$24 350 (Source: 1970 US Census); by 1990 prices averaged between \$275 000 to \$300 000. Thus both areas saw an increase in property prices of approximately 2000 per cent from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Investment in gentrification past and present has been undertaken by government, public and private bodies. Involvement has been both direct and indirect as this research shows.

Problems of housing finance have been similar for the pioneers of gentrification in both England and the US. Red lining was rife in both countries in the 1950s and 1960s (Hamnett & Randolph, 1986; Marcuse, 1986; Williams, 1986), lenders refused to lend in areas of old and substandard housing. This changed in the US in 1977 when the Federal Community Reinvestment Act outlawed the discrimination caused by red lining, and was underpinned further in New York in 1978 when it became State law. Mortgage lenders in England were persuaded to lend more liberally rather earlier than in the US. The House Purchase and Housing Act 1959 was designed to assist purchase for owner occupation of older houses by improved building society mortgage facilities; to extend local authorities' powers to lend money for house purchase; and to simplify improvement grant procedure (Milner Holland Report, 1965, p. 240).

Aid to finance gentrification from the government has been made available in both England and the US. In England and particularly in London, improvement grants have certainly assisted the gentrification process (see Hamnett, 1973; Dugmore & Williams, 1974). The aim of improvement grants was originally to improve the stock of run down housing. The 1969 Housing Act gave local authorities the power to allocate grants at their discretion for improvements up to £1200 tax free per dwelling. These became a special tax subsidy to property companies who were buying up vacant properties which were then rehabilitated and sold at a profit. The results were commented on by the *Sunday Times* (1972):

Far from helping the needy, the scheme has drastically decreased the amount of accommodation available for rent, and provided in its place much more expensive accommodation for sale.

In 1971 56 per cent of all Islington's conversion grants were allocated to the wards of Barnsbury and St Peters (Power, 1972, p. 3). This is significant for it shows the extent of renovation, rehabilitation and tenurial conversion in this area. People were investing in property in Barnsbury heavily in the early 1970s.

Moreover, property in government designated General Improvement Areas or Housing Action Areas received a higher grant, and the local authorities, with extra money from the Exchequer, were persuaded to undertake environmental improvements, such as landscaping projects and building facade renovation, and to improve public amenities.

In the US government policies were and are more overtly directed towards helping the gentrification process. Examples include: *Section 203(k) Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance* where the Federal Housing Administration insured private loans for the purchase and rehabilitation of 1-4 unit properties; *Community Development Block Grants* which gave low interest loans and grants for housing rehabilitation; *Section 223(f)* consisting of mortgage insurance to buy or repair existing rental housing, and there are many more such examples. State govern-

ments also introduced policies of their own which contributed to the gentrification process. For example in New York the J-51 Program contains a dual tax break: firstly, tax exemption of 12 years on the increase in a building's assessed dollar value resulting from improvements, and secondly, an annual tax abatement and reduction of up to 8.33 per cent of the reasonable cost of the improvements for between 9 and 20 years (see Zukin, 1982, p. 159). In Park Slope 1970-80 9.7 per cent of all multi-family units had been rehabilitated using the J-51 Program (NYC DCP, 1985, p 41).

Private agencies also offered incentives to gentrifiers, Chase Manhattan Bank's 'Urban Home Loan Program', designed to boost the rehabilitation of vacant 1-4 family homes. In New York, corporate initiative formulated by public utility companies in the Park Slope area mediated in the gentrification process. In 1966 Brooklyn Union Gas restored a four-story brownstone in Park Slope, which was too large for revitalisation by an individual owner. This and other projects became known as the 'Cinderella Schemes', and they attempted to stimulate private sector investment in Park Slope and elsewhere in New York City. By 1985 over 100 schemes had been completed. Another Utility Company, Con Edison, also performed rehabilitation programmes known as 'Renaissance', which tended to specialise in rehabilitating buildings for co-op conversion.

Grass roots action by individuals has stimulated gentrification in both England and the US. In New York this was a deliberate attempt by pioneering gentrifiers to rehabilitate their neighbourhood. A group of pioneers set up The Park Slope Betterment Committee. They bought houses, rehabilitated them and then advertised them through brokers to white collar workers, their aim being to 'stabilise' the area (*Civic News*, 1969, p. 32). In Barnsbury, private attempts to stimulate gentrification were less overt. However, pioneer gentrifiers in the area set up the Barnsbury Housing Association with the aim of rehabilitating housing for rent at a cost accessible to local families. They took over a number of Greater London Council owned houses and converted them into flats. Unfortunately the rehabilitation cost more than was expected and therefore they had to charge rents of over £12 a week, which the locals could not afford (see Hall, 1972). Professionals being able to afford this rent level became the main incomers into the area. Subsequently the Greater London Council withdrew their support when they realised the implications of the scheme, which rumour had it had been the motive all along.

In terms of investment and initiative there are both differences and similarities in the gentrification of London and New York. The bias of governmental policy and of public and private initiative probably reflects the differing urban ideologies in Great Britain and the US. Gentrification has been more actively promoted in New York than in London. This is best interpreted in terms of the fear of the ghettoisation of inner urban areas in the US. For example, public utility companies like Brooklyn Union Gas and Con Edison would suffer from a loss of profitability in the demise of certain areas, therefore their interest in 'securing' these areas. Similarly the US government and agencies such as banks have an interest in revitalising the inner city's tax base, the tax base has become distorted with the higher income groups locating in the suburbs. In London devalorisation and ghettoisation are not as problematic in the private housing market, they are more often a feature of public sector housing. Ghettoisation is more associated with racial patterning in the US than in Britain. This may be one reason why public investment in the gentrification process has been less overt in London



than in New York. Despite these differences the profit frontier has been very active in both London and New York, and the potential for investment has been similar in both areas.

Property values and investment potential are increased on the profit frontier when an area attains conservation status. The following section will consider the conservation ideology associated with the gentrification of London and New York.

### Conservation/Preservation Practices

The historical-geographical context of the neighbourhood forms an important background to the gentrification process in an area. The conservation of a particular landscape reconstitutes and reinvigorates the historical-geographical context. Jager (1986) theorises this process, arguing that the conspicuous appropriation and consumption of past architectural features in 'Victoriana' demonstrates the constitution of social class.

Conservation/preservation is legally constituted (through various laws and statutes) and, where capitalised on, becomes a form of profit-making. Therefore conservation relates to both the law and capital accumulation processes found in the two previous sections.

Some areas of gentrification in England and the US have gained considerably by the creation of conservation (in the UK) or preservation (in the US) status. Indeed conservation has created a virtuous circle of investment, for gentrifying or buying a house in a conservation area increases the chances of profit and propounds the idea of a good investment in both London and New York. But do different frameworks for conservation affect gentrification differently in London and New York?

This section looks at conservation legislation and provides an insight into some of the organisations and groups who promote the process.

In England section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, designates conservation areas and sets out controls regarding the demolition of buildings and requires local authorities to develop schemes to preserve and enhance the areas. The statutory definition for conservation areas is:

areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (DOE, 1977).

In 1977 the Department of the Environment emphasised building and environmental control in conservation areas. Ten years later the notion of change was accommodated more readily, liberating the gentrification process somewhat:

conservation allows for change as well as preservation (DOE, 1987).

Finance for repairs is available from a variety of sources: from local authorities, The National Heritage Memorial Fund, The Architectural Heritage Fund and from Housing Act grants.

The now defunct Greater London Council also advocated the importance of conservation:

In a period of so much fundamental change, it is more than ever important to provide a sense of continuity and identity in our lives and to keep some static references from the past. An element of stability in

the Human Habitat is necessary to healthy and balanced living (Greater London Council, 1971, p. 8).

The Greater London Development Plan produced by the Greater London Council included a conservation ethic which was relevant to the Barnsbury area:

The council proposes, through the medium of the plan, to initiate a more vigorous and comprehensive policy for the conservation of the features that give London its distinctive character (Rock, 1970).

A section of Barnsbury attained conservation area status in the 1970s, and this area has been expanding ever since. Islington Borough Council designates and extends conservation areas and formulates policies to protect them.

In the US the ideology of preservation has a long history. In New York the Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City offers tax rebates on building restoration or maintenance, also a tax remission on some landmarked buildings. The commission was established in 1965 to make sure that all important buildings under the Landmarks Preservation Law (local law No. 46) were preserved.

In Park Slope a section of this area gained 'landmark preservation' status in July 1973. As in Barnsbury this has been expanded more recently. In approving the Park Slope Historic District the Commission commented:

... the district provides a great variety of residential facilities ranging from small row houses and modest apartments to elegant mansions from the Italianate and French Second Empire styles of the late 1860s and early 1870s to the Georgian Revival, Neo-Federal, and Neo-Tudor styles of the early 20th century. Finest in the city and among the most outstanding in the nation are the Romanesque Revival row houses, town houses and mansions (NYC DCP, 1990, p. 6).

Conservation and preservation in London and New York is similarly conceived in that there is reference to character, identity and the historical past (see Maher *et al.*, 1985). As such the conservation or preservation ethic behind gentrification in both cities is ideologically similar.

Outside of the governmental organisations associated with conservation or preservation there are various grass roots organisations active in the gentrification process. These groups though appear to be more actively organised in the US than in England. In England many of the groups which formed in the early days of gentrification became obsolete once the process gained momentum in an area. Moreover, these locally constituted grass roots organisations only directed their focus on their own specific area. They neglected areas outside of their constituted boundaries, even if these areas were adjacent and of similar architectural style. In London groups active in promoting the revitalisation of their area rarely crossed paths, for example, groups in Barnsbury remained quite separate from their counterparts just across the road in Canonbury. The result is that conservation's attendant, gentrification, is not promoted more generally within the city or within the country as a whole. The organisations in London appeared to be more political than those in New York. This may be due to the fact that they had to manipulate local government policy more directly at a time when the public had little direct input into local government planning policy (see Ferris, 1972).

In the US the promotion of preservation and its attendant gentrification has been more ambitious, perhaps because the politics played out are more community based in the US than in England. Kasinitz (1988, p. 169) argues that in the US the formation of community groups and the attainment of historic landmark status have become "common renovation strategies nationwide". The 1960s saw the emergence of The Brownstone Revival Committee founded by a pioneer gentrifier in Park Slope. A non-profit organisation, its aim was and is to promote brownstone living and revitalisation in New York City. Its newsletter—*The Brownstoner*—covers issues concerning brownstoning and offers hints on renovation and rehabilitation. The Brownstone Conference (an umbrella group) was established by a Brooklyn realtor in 1972 to set up a brownstone bank to counteract the redlining of brownstone areas in New York. It holds an annual ball and fair. The Brownstone Conference has acted as a catalyst for the gentrification of brownstones all over the US. The Back to the City Conference was also established by a pioneer gentrifier of Park Slope in 1974, its aim being to stimulate interest in the revival and preservation of downtown neighbourhoods all over the US. The conference has an annual meeting each year in a different city in the US and offers workshops, lectures and tours. The conference is sponsored by governmental, private and public organisations. Following Kasinitz (1988, p. 169):

The fact that the Brownstoners invested time and energy into using the media and government indicates that they had, on some level grasped a basic fact about modern urban neighborhoods, namely that they exist within a larger framework. To establish social or geographic boundaries, neighborhood residents must have their claims recognised by external factors in the city's polity and economy.

In the US (and in New York and Park Slope) brownstoning is stylised as an act of love:

... I think one should approach the acquisition of a brownstone, the way one goes into a love affair: eyes open, but half-closed too ... Pipes can be fixed, cracked walls repaired, painted woodwork stripped, old heating plants replaced. Those are only incidentals. What really counts is love ... To the non-lover, it is merely a rowhouse. To the brownstone connoisseur, it is part of an architecturally homogeneous city scape, scaled perfectly for its function, housing many but offering each person space and privacy and a civilised style of living ... (*The Brownstoner*, 1969).

In Barnsbury without a singular architectural motif (the brownstone is Park Slope's architectural motif) the love affair is made more difficult. The post-war council architecture also blights the love affair. This may account for the lack of organisations comparable to the Brownstone Revival Committee in New York.

Conservation is a legally constituted form of profit-making. In London and New York the conservation of neighbourhoods is promoted similarly, yet in New York the promotion is more ambitious. The organisations who promote conservation in the US are more outward looking than those in England. For example, the Brownstone Revival Committee was initiated in Park Slope, but was operationalised for New York City as a whole, and promoted all over the US.

## Conclusion

This paper argues that there is an Atlantic Gap in operation between the gentrification of England and the US, in so doing it emphasises the importance of the role of context in gentrification research. Context is not only important in revealing that gentrification has many country, city and locality specific traits, it also reveals that some theorisations or conceptualisations are less useful out of their own context.

An Atlantic Gap is in operation between gentrification in England and the US for a variety of reasons. The leasehold system in England affects the timing of gentrification and the tenure system the flow of gentrification, this is less apparent in the US. The rent gap is a more appropriate theorisation of gentrification in the US than the value gap because of its focus on land, abandonment and place, alongside relevant legal and political differences. The government is more active in promoting gentrification, and more incentives for gentrification are available in the US than in England. Moreover, grass roots groups who promote gentrification are more active and outward looking in the US than in England.

In conclusion I advocate a special concentration on context in future analyses of gentrification.

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# Rethinking gentrification: beyond the positions of economics or culture

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Two languages:  
As of the soul,  
As of the cell,  
Take it in turn;  
In new pages  
Each other spell\*

## 1 Introduction

The trend so far for those social scientists excited by both Marxist economic and postmodernist cultural interpretations has been an anarchic eclecticism. Post-Marxists such as Stanley Aronowitz (1988a; 1988b) and Scott Lash (1990a; 1990b) force Marxian analysis to conform to a postmodern reference system. Aronowitz (1988a) adjusts class to a postmodern analysis and allows no special role for the working class. Lash likewise finds the Marxist definition of the working class less relevant today and wants postmodernism to revise this (see Lash and Urry, 1987). Some even see postmodernism as a continuation of Marxism. On the other hand, neo-Marxists such as Jameson (1985; 1988; 1989) and Soja (1987; 1989) stand on a Marxian base and inform it with selected facets from the postmodernist project. Jameson (1988) classes himself as a postmodernist and wants to include the Marxist concept of class identity which he feels is important. Soja (1989) uses Marxist notions of time and space and adds on postmodernist concepts. The problem with these attempts are, first, that the analysis is always dominated by either Marxism (or postmodernism) and, secondly, that the productive tension between the two sets of ideas is rarely exploited. Indeed, some neo-Marxists such as David Harvey (see Harvey, 1989: 355) select the most favourable aspects of postmodernism for their project and subsume them within an unaltered Marxism: 'Aesthetic and cultural practices matter, and the conditions of their *production* deserve the closest attention' (emphasis added). Those aspects of postmodernism which are outside of or destabilize their project are expelled in a derogatory manner.

This article seeks to transcend the oppositional thinking produced by the dualism of Marxist economic analysis and postmodern cultural analysis. I use the terms 'Marxist

\* From part II of the poem, 'Complementary complementarities' by Richards (1972: 162–69).

economic' and 'postmodern cultural' loosely, in that they refer to some of the main theoretical and philosophical dichotomies in the literature on gentrification. Primarily I am interested in the duality of economic determinism and cultural determinism, but within this equation there are also the debates between production and consumption, and structure and agency. The notion of complementarity is used as part of a dialectic in which I specify the contradictions between Marxist economic thought and postmodern cultural thought. I then show how these contradictions can be transcended in such a way as to improve our understanding of gentrification.

These ideas express a refusal to be restricted to either a Marxist economic or a postmodernist cultural camp. But to combine them effectively and satisfactorily requires a full appreciation of their differences and contradictions. I would argue that the challenge of postmodernism to Marxism remains the same today as it was in 1988 when Julie Graham (p. 65) asked us to consider postmodernism alongside Marxism, for

Post-modern anti-essentialism invites us to free ourselves of the burdens which we long have carried – the burden of explaining a complex and multifaceted history with a limited set of categories, of revealing rather than constituting the centrality of class, of waiting for politics rather than entering politics, of scorning non-Marxism as an intellectual and political error rather than engaging it in many forms and relating it to Marxism by relating Marxism to it . . . post-modernism resists the subordination of all experience and social life to class struggle and the laws of accumulation, as Marxism can and should.

Like Graham, I do not want to choose between economic Marxism and cultural postmodernism; I want the stability of the former and the destability of the latter. I want to utilize a productive tension between the two.

The first step towards producing a synthesis with respect to Marxist economic and cultural interpretations is already apparent in the identification of the two sets of ideas as a duality. The positing of this duality enables points of conflict to be identified. But the particular ways in which economic Marxism and cultural postmodernism are contradictory need to be clearly specified. In order to integrate the two we need a clear idea of their differences and similarities. The creative act of integration '... consists of a breaking of categories, of a merger or transcendence of opposites. The present task is therefore to isolate some of these contradictory forces and then indicate how what is now split comes together again' (Olsson, 1980: 20e).

I am, though, hesitant to integrate Marxist and postmodernist ideas prematurely. In the history of geography the transcendence of theoretical and conceptual boundaries has rarely been met with praise and is usually discussed in negative terms as 'combining the uncombinable' (Cloeke *et al.*, 1991: 95). Giddens's (1984) structuration theory is one such example. In reaction to the limitations of Marxist-style analyses and humanist analyses, and expressed in a refusal to be fully based in one of the other camp, structuration theory tried to combine structure and agency. Some argued that this was not an altogether successful endeavour (see Pred, 1983; Johnston and Claval, 1984; Philo, 1984). In a different vein Sayer (1984) has attempted to merge Marxism and humanism in advocating a realist geography. This has also been criticized, by Saunders and Williams (1986) who see it as a disguised Marxism, and by Harvey (1987) who, on the other hand, sees critical realism as incompatible with Marxism. I reject these criticisms of theoretical and conceptual integration. The criticisms are examples of the attempt by academics to dichotomize social science in an attempt to maintain positions of power and in that, of order (see Pile and Rose, 1992). The separation and in that dichotomization of Marxism and postmodernism (of economic determinism and cultural determinism) necessitates a political choice as to which side of the fence to place ourselves on; there are no allowances

made for a middle ground or for something outside of these discourses altogether. On the other hand, integrating Marxism and postmodernism pollutes the oft-defended purity of both theories (see Graham, 1988: 61) and, as in power politics, one side may always dominate. For one of the main criticisms of both Giddens and Sayer has been of the domination of Marxism in their discourse. Exploiting the tension between the duality of economic Marxism and cultural postmodernism is one way of overcoming these problems.

Using duality is by no means a new idea in geography. Duality in geography has been used in order to attain a synthesis between different theories or concepts. As mentioned, Giddens worked on the duality of structure and agency in order to transcend the determinism of structuralism and the voluntarism of human agency. Following Gregson (1986: 185),

... duality is central to the entire structurationist programme, figuring in both Giddens's presentation of the agency-structure relationship and the links between this and time and space ... each exerts a determining influence on the other but this is again of equal weight.

And Sayer (1984), identifying with Giddens's project, is positive about the results. He argues that Giddens has achieved his goal through the use of duality. Sayer uses duality to maintain the strengths of both Marxism and humanism as complementary parts in differentiating social reality (see Cloke *et al.*, 1991: 151). For Sayer (1992: 11) and realists, *a* and *b* are compatible. They can simultaneously accept two different ontologies and maintain their integrity as complementary parts in an analysis of social reality. Gunnar Olsson (1980: 3e-8e) believes in duality and in complementarity as well. He argues that understanding involves translating between a set of different meanings, for knowledge is extended in the comparison of ideas. He finds the resulting issues over 'fidelity' intriguing. Olsson argues, 'As any epistemologist knows, binary opposition is the first step towards dialectical transcendence.' The dualism of Marxism and postmodernism and the conflicts therein provide Olsson's first step towards the transcendence of their difference. The principle of complementarity attempts to overcome duality not by looking for a new universal theory, but by comparing and informing one set of ideas with another. After all, '... in arguing with rivals ... we presuppose that our theories are not discrete and wholly incommensurable, but overlapping, and only incommensurable in limited areas' (Sayer, 1992: 4).

In the following sections the notion of complementarity is discussed and then illustrated with particular reference to the urban process of gentrification.

## II Complementarity

The realization that these two situations are complementary solves the riddle of the licentiate's egos observing each other ... (Rosenfeld, cited by Holton, 1970: 1047).

The ideas behind this article began with the notion that what we see through one eye is not the same as what we see through the other eye (Richards, 1972: 114). I wanted to look with both my eyes: to emphasize my rejection of that monological theorization which can be associated with being positioned as either a Marxist or a postmodernist. In the theoretical battle between Marxism and postmodernism neither have achieved the upper hand but, more importantly, the battle has identified some of the problems which exist within and between both analyses. Therefore the way forward, the way which avoids the theoretical stalemate found in the battle between both conceptualizations, is to inform



both Marxism and postmodernism through each other in the articulation and comparison of their ideas.

Complementarity is a means through which to approach, focus on, specify and comprehend the real incongruity between Marxism and postmodernism. Complementarity will highlight the conflict between both sets of ideas and face the conflict head on. It is important to look at the correspondence of Marxism and postmodernism not as two universalistic metanarratives but as instruments of prediction. Through complementarity a synthesis and a concern for contradiction and dialectical oppositions become equally important (Richards, 1972: 110). Complementarity uses concepts and methods of thought which are mutually exclusive in tandem. Incompatible conceptions can be represented without direct conflict and the outcomes will support and complement each other (see Richards, 1972: 114). Commensurability will be constructed through dialectical inquiry. But although complementarity patches the split between Marxism and postmodernism, it is not a profound solution (see Holton, 1970: 1029). There is, though, the possibility of achieving a higher mode of representation which could synthesize the two explanations. This higher mode of representation need not be foundationalist (see Sayer, 1992: 2–15, on the fallibilism of contemporary realism). The game plan is essentially differentials followed by interdependence (Sayer, 1992: 22). This is a dialectical inquiry by nature, and thus guards against the immobile juxtaposition of opposites. By revealing the internal tensions between Marxist ideas and postmodernist ideas the juxtaposition becomes dynamic. Dialectics separate but they also unite. In this unification there is an accumulation of thought and an opportunity to integrate some of the ideas from both Marxism and postmodernism. For both Marxism and postmodernism are wrong and right; the former attempts a structured whole, the latter a more flexible ambiguity. Constructing a dialectical relationship between Marxism and postmodernism means that the 'revolution' will occur at the interface between the two. For following Olsson (1980, Preface), who talks about the juxtaposition of 'birds in egg' with 'eggs in bird',

... the old and the new are tied together through their backs, staring in different directions and with faces painted in complementary colors. Out of the total image of whiteness grows nevertheless a presentiment of another social science.

Marx also set up relational opposites in a dialectical manner (see Ollman, 1971); value, labour and capital are used relationally, they frequently break up and then re-form in new combinations (Harvey, 1989: 51). The setting up of relational opposites creates a structured synthesis in that there is continuity in tracing the fragment (or, in this case, conceptualization) from production to consumption (Foster, 1983: 142; Harvey, 1989: 51). Marx's dialectic is the conflict between thesis and antithesis; this is followed by a synthesis which then gives rise to another bipolar opposition. But because I adopt a dialectical inquiry does not mean that I come down on the Marxist side of the fence; pastiche and *différance* in postmodernist thought include elements of dialectical analysis.

Briefly, I want to argue why the construction of complementarity is useful in relation to Marxist economic and postmodernist cultural analyses in geography. One general example: Marx himself and those who advocate a Marxist geography have had much difficulty in overcoming the contradictions between economic determinism and anti-economism. For example, Doreen Massey's (1984) work rejects economic determinism while allowing the economy to determine uneven development (Graham, 1990: 54). The construction of Marxist and postmodernist complementarity helps those Marxist geogra-



phers who are trapped by this contradiction. For Marxist economic determinism is complemented by postmodernism's anti-economism.

In the following section I look at economically determined and culturally determined explanations of gentrification. I consider them in a complementary manner in an attempt to merge economic and cultural ideas to provide a more sensitive illustration of the gentrification process.

### III Gentrification: economically determined and culturally determined complementarity

[W]e have no foolproof holistic theory of or methodology for the study of gentrification, and it would be presumptuous to think we ever will (Clark, 1992: 358).

Gentrification has been of particular interest to geographers over the last three decades. In the 1970s and in some cases in the 1980s, the geographical work on gentrification tended to follow either an economically determined or a culturally determined route of investigation. Hamnett (1991: 174) lists some of the dichotomies which have arisen from the gentrification literature: capital, class, production and supply versus choice, culture, consumption and consumer demand – essentially a Marxist economic framework of investigation versus a cultural framework of investigation. Although some elements of the capital versus culture divide are still apparent in the 1990s, by the 1980s researchers were beginning to realize that economic and cultural analyses were *both* important for a sensitive investigation of gentrification. Indeed, Sharon Zukin's (1982) book, *Loft living*, which analysed gentrification in SoHo, Manhattan, considering the point where capital and culture meet, was a very important precursor to the change from the mutual exclusivity of economic and cultural analyses of gentrification to the mutual recognition of their interpretative value. Work by Rose (1984), Jager (1986), Smith (1987) and Caulfield (1989) furthered this project. And more recently Filion (1991), Knox (1991), Clark (1991; 1992), Hamnett (1991; 1992) and Smith (1991; 1992) have attempted to open up the boundaries in the analysis of gentrification.

When considering the gentrification literature, like Clark (1992: 358), I am frustrated with centrepieces and encouraged by attempts to consider complementarity (see Hamnett, 1991; 1992; Smith, 1992): the challenge is of listening without reflexive categorization. In very simple terms the juxtaposition of Marxism and postmodernism is one of economic interpretation versus cultural interpretation. Smith (especially 1979; 1982) provides an example of a strongly economic interpretation, and Ley (1980) offers a strongly cultural interpretation (see Hamnett's 1991 attempt to integrate the Smith and Ley camps). From a postmodernist perspective, Smith's thesis fails because of the emphasis on economics and production, and the special power given to the movements of capital. From a Marxist perspective, Ley's thesis fails because of its emphasis on culture and consumption, the acceptance of postindustrialism, the political power given to the new élite and the relegation of the production of the built environment and nineteenth-century notions of labour and capital to be of secondary importance (Hamnett, 1991: 177). Ironically, Ley's conceptualization of culture and consumption has its roots deeply embedded in the changing structure of production which is leading to changes in employment and class structure, but this is taken as given, and Ley does not investigate this further.

Most attempts which have been made to include both of these interpretations when analysing gentrification are to be commended but criticized. Zukin's (1982) *Loft living* was

one of the first attempts to introduce culture into a politico-economic analysis of gentrification in New York. The economic side of the equation is capitalist uneven development, and the cultural side the *Zeitgeist* for aesthetics. Her 'artistic mode of production' is a revealing play on Marx's capitalist mode of production, and refers to the linkage of accumulation and culture through historic preservation. The life cycle of the artistic mode of production depends on creative dynamism and the abilities of market forces. Zukin looks at culture in terms of the market and finds it more in keeping with the political economy approach. Zukin retains a strong Marxist structuralist base. Culture is superimposed; as such, culture is made subservient to capital and only seen to be significant within accumulation activities. Like Smith (1987), Zukin prioritizes a structuralist economic interpretation: 'The remarkable openness to non-economic factors that is now breathing fresh air into the social sciences should not divert attention from underlying structural changes' (Postscript, 1988 edition: 208). She positions herself with Smith, against the consumer preference school, and looks at cultures of consumption within patterns of accumulation. Excellent though this piece of work is, the economic is prioritized and the cultural made subservient.

Jackson (1985) asserts the relevance of structural underpinnings in setting the preconditions for neighbourhood change, but this is not enough; he argues that analyses of gentrification need to look at historically contingent factors, such as human agency, using the social-movements approach: 'Neither "cultural" nor "capital" is accorded an independent or autonomous role, but analysis turns on their specific interaction in particular historical circumstances' (p. 214). Unfortunately, Jackson's concentration on merging structure and agency draws attention away from more general considerations of how culture and economics are connected in the process of gentrification (the activities of the culture industry come to mind). Human agency must not stand on its own theoretically, but feed through the interaction of culture and capital.

Rose (1984) argues for the integration of ideas on capital and culture. She wants to correct the conflation of reproduction and consumption. She looks at the production of gentrifiers and lifestyle as well as the production of gentrifiable property. Zukin (1982) had earlier looked at the production of gentrifiers through the cultural workings of capital. Rose argues that class-based explanations of gentrification should be opened up to include the restructuring of work processes and the realities of neighbourhood politics. I agree with Rose: narrow categories found in analyses of gentrification need to be opened out. Essentially, Rose offers a realist conceptualization of gentrification as a 'chaotic' process, and argues that there should be more than one starting point in an analysis of gentrification. Rose prompts Smith (1987) to rethink gentrification, yet Smith dislikes Rose's 'chaos' and goes back to a singular starting point.

Following Marx, Smith (1987) begins his analysis of gentrification with the commodity itself – the production of gentrifiable property. He does, though, become more sensitive to demand and consumption: '... there is no argument but that demand can at times ... alter the nature of production' (p. 163). But he still prioritizes a Marxist economic interpretation: 'The new urban patterns now unfolding do involve the construction of "consumption landscapes" in the city ... but this does not imply that urban geographical change is now somehow demand led' (p. 151). Smith writes that it is time to include a demand notion in Marxist analyses of gentrification, yet an adherence to the priority of production and accumulation makes this difficult. This is indicative of much of the confusion in the gentrification literature. It is by no means easy to complement two sets of ideas. It is difficult for Smith to include a consumption-based argument in his thesis

without first theoretically accepting the emergence of the new middle classes. Smith reinterprets consumption society through the regulationist analysis of Aglietta in 'A theory of capitalist regulation' (1979), placing it in a historical and economic framework. Smith emphasizes the differentiation of production and consumption in post-Fordism – the 'radical bifurcation of the consumption dream', consumption led urbanization is subsumed under economic restructuring. Smith summarizes his argument as: gentrification should be defined at its core (production) not at its margins (consumption).

Munt (1987) is interested in a combination of the economic and the cultural. He argues that to understand gentrification we should consider economic restructuring and demand factors, but his work is heavily weighted towards economic context; cultural context is only those cultural preferences asserted through the demand side of the equation. Culture is not associated with supply, only demand.

Filion (1991) designed a model to explain the consumption sphere-class structure relationship; this is commendable in its move away from the production-consumption dichotomy. Filion's central argument is that gentrification consolidates the gentrifiers' class position, and that consumption and class formation are linked: 'Selection opens the door to the expression of human agency within the consumption sphere and thus rules out pure production sphere determination' (p. 156). Filion's consideration of how consumption contributes to class formation is well researched and illustrated the internal tension between class structure and gentrification. But Filion moves the equation too far in the direction of consumption and, as a result, human agency is emphasized at the expense of structural conditions in his analysis of gentrification and class structure (see especially pp. 570–71).

For Mills (1988), the gentrified commodity (property) constitutes a cultural meaning, and history legitimates its conspicuous consumption. For both Ley (1986; 1987) and Mills (1988), the new middle class are the patrons and clients of postmodernism and conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption is more important in their gentrification thesis than production determinants.

Caulfield (1989) is similarly interested in the role of culture, the role of philosophic or aesthetic values and structures of feeling about everyday life. He focuses on the desire by marginal gentrifiers (first-phase gentrifiers) for older city places. Caulfield agrees with Williams (1986: 68) that the central weakness in the gentrification literature is the failure to consider the importance of culture. Caulfield argues that the seeds of gentrification are found in the 'emancipatory practice' of moving to older city places. Thus for Caulfield, gentrification is determined not in the production sphere but in the consumption or personal political sphere. Like Ley (1980; 1986; 1987), Caulfield just takes the changes in the sphere of production as given, or else as themselves precipitated by changes in consumption, reproduction and/or culture, and so on.

The most recent attempt to integrate cultural and economic interpretations has come from Hamnett (1991). Although providing a very useful review of the different approaches, he then just offers a different starting point for the analysis of gentrification, one probably influenced by Rose (1984): '... if gentrification theory has a centrepiece it must rest on the conditions for the production of potential gentrifiers' (Hamnett, 1991: 187). Hamnett wants to integrate production and consumption in terms of structure and agency. Indeed, Hamnett is right when he argues that the 'choice, consumption and culture' side of the debate has always had one foot in the material base of production with its changes and cultural manifestations. But as I argued earlier with reference to Caulfield and Ley, they take the latter as given and do not detail them.



From this brief review of some of the attempts to integrate culture and capital in the analysis of gentrification, it is apparent that, ultimately, either an economically determined or a culturally determined framework of investigation seems to gain priority. One exception is Jager (1986), who demonstrates that culture and capital are mutually constitutive, '... in that objects of culture are made to bear the burden of a more onerous social significance, and yet retain a distinct material function' (p. 85). He argues that the neoarchaism inherent in gentrification, 'the taste for the bygone', transcends economics by attaining social position through symbolic sign. The economic is transcended, but the economic is not made subservient. Jager manages to consider both culture and economics without prioritizing one or the other.

I want to argue that Marxist economic and postmodernist cultural explanations are two sides of the same coin. Considering the two explanations in a complementary manner should help us to confront the inadequacies found in both. In terms of Marxist economic explanations the Marxist two-class model needs to be broadened to include the new middle classes (see Smith, 1987). Also, a modernist conceptualization of class struggle is no longer valid, for the formation of class consciousness in postmodern society is quite different; and, following Rose (1984), the conflation of reproduction and consumption with the production sphere ignores the importance of demographic and lifestyle profiles of gentrifiers (see also Jackson, 1985), politics of identity, and so on. In terms of objective postmodern explanations of gentrification, a consideration of economics would make it easier to determine the transition from modernity to postmodernity than just a consideration of culture. To understand postmodern lifestyle we need to be able to trace its roots in socioeconomic restructuring. Indeed, material and symbolic value, profit and desire should be considered as part and parcel of the same thing. We need to juxtapose Marxism and postmodernism as a complementary duality from which we can integrate both explanations.

I have selected three issues from the gentrification literature through which to illustrate the complementarity of Marxist economic and cultural explanations.

### 1 The politicization of interest groups

In a consideration of the politicization of interest groups in gentrification we can juxtapose an economically determined (Marxist) interpretation against a culturally determined (postmodernist) interpretation, formulating a dialectical relationship and expressing the tension and difference between both sets of ideas.

A Marxist interpretation would be most interested in the roots of the class struggle (see Katznelson, 1981; Castells, 1983), which would be associated with gentrification and the politicization of interest groups. Marxist class struggle is considered to be a determinant of humankind's development. The struggle is for common class interests where private property and material value dichotomize society. According to Badcock (1984: 64), a proper analysis of class

... is obliged not only to show how they are defined in terms of their relation to the means of production, but also to show how they are structured by ideological disposition, by patterns of political action, by institutions of power and property, and by the policies of the state.

Indeed, class only exists for Marx 'when it assumes a directly political character' (Keat and Urry, 1975: 108). Zukin (1982) analyses the politicization of interest groups in this manner, as she looks at reactions by the élite and the state to the artistic mode of production.

A postmodernist interpretation would be interested in the formulation of the new middle class and its political voice. For in postmodernity, according to Bell (1973), property is no longer relevant, and the present class structure is based on the accumulation of knowledge. Filion (1991: 563) argues that the potential for political action associated with gentrification is enhanced by the new middle classes' political culture – a higher degree of education allied to their consumption of political issues which makes them sensitive to procedure changes, and so on. Participation in the political process is seen as both rational and desirable (Henig and Gale, 1987: 406).

Harvey (1989: 116) argues that postmodernism fragments Marxist class struggle, for there is a lack of a coherent set of politics due to a concentration on ephemerality and fragmentation. Ley (1988), on the other hand, argues that the postmodern project belongs to the politicized cultural new class. But this is not to say that the cultural new class is a coherent body for, in terms of politicization, the new middle class have an ambiguous role as both exploiter and exploited (see Mills, 1988). Indeed, Baudrillard (1989: 111) expresses this ambiguity in the shocking slogan which he gives his new middle class:

You can't have your money and spend it too!  
 You can't have your cake and eat it too!  
 You can't eat your wife and fuck it too!  
 You can't live and have your living too!

The ambiguity encompassed in the identity of the new middle class stems from the conflict found in their act of demarcating or differentiating themselves from other classes (Baudrillard, 1981; Jager, 1986). This conflict is reflected in the architecture of gentrified property: external façadal display denotes candidature for the dominant class (*bourgeoisie*), while internal renovations attempt to distance the middle class from the lower orders (*proletariat*) (Jager, 1986).

In terms of the different ways in which economically determined and culturally determined analyses explain the politicization of interest groups, there is a productive tension at the point where economic and cultural appropriation meet. For the identity of the politicized classes/groups is established and expressed through the dialectic of economic and cultural appropriation.

When looking at the politicization of interest groups it becomes apparent that Marxism and postmodernism are two sides of the explanatory coin. The Marxist model of two-class struggle cannot be removed from the equation in which the new middle class identifies itself. For identification with other classes is important in the formulation of class identity and in the politicization of interest groups in gentrification. Identity is both established and expressed through economic and cultural appropriation. Moreover, an acceptance of the ambiguity of class identity in postmodern society is important in a consideration of the politicization of interest groups, for the groups more often than not cross class lines. There is not always a coherent set of politics. A structural assessment of class alignment could help the investigation and interpretation of the different identities which the politicized groups associated with gentrification facilitate. Henig (1982), among others, argues that the neighbourhood provides a base for middle-class political action. But recent research by Bridge (1991) found a lack of class-consistent responses to neighbourhood change in terms of gentrification. This is not interpreted as class dealignment, but he argues that the neighbourhood is not 'the critical site of class reproduction'.

Urban protest movements are part of the politicization of interest groups associated with gentrification. Castells (1977: 41) argues,



This is the picture, full of contrasts and confusion, in which new social contradictions are inextricably mixed with boy scout attitudes, where you get a rejection of new forms of oppression at the same time as a hankering after the 'good ole days', where revolutionary action is juxtaposed with a defense of the social contract of neighbourliness.

Castells (1977) unintentionally reveals the internal tensions and contradictions between Marxist and postmodernist conceptualizations of the politicization of interest groups. Both explanations are an important part of the explanatory coin, and it is at the interface of the two that we can access the most sensitive picture of what gentrification is all about.

## 2 Uneven development

Mandel (1975: 85) defines uneven development as follows: 'The accumulation of capital itself produces development and underdevelopment as mutually determining moments of the uneven and combined movement of capital.' For Smith (1982), gentrification is at the leading edge of uneven development. The dynamic for gentrification is provided by the dialectical tension between differentiation and equalization in terms of the movement of capital over the urban landscape: 'Capital is like a plague of locusts, it settles on one place, devours it, then moves on to plague another place. Better in the process of restoring itself after one plague the region makes itself ripe for another' (Smith, 1984: 152).

The tension between differentiation and equalization is the same as that between disinvestment (devalorization) and reinvestment (revalorization): the dialectical relationship in Smith's (1979) rent gap. Bradford and Rubinowitz (1975) have a similar argument: producer preferences for profit have caused institutions like banks, governments and property owners to disinvest in these same areas: '... sustained disinvestment begins as a result of largely rational decisions by owners, landlords, local and national governments and an array of financial institutions.' (Smith, Duncan and Reid, 1989: 239). See also Salins (1981), who likewise discusses landlord market rationality.

Duncan and Ley (1982), however, argue that capital is more conservative than most structuralists such as Smith would have us believe, and that inner-city reinvestment would appear to be too risky for entrepreneurs until demand establishes itself. Clark (1988) argues that human motivations are just as important in the revitalization process; whereas Smith argues that producer preference for profit is much more important than changing consumer preference, as an explanation for reinvestment in the inner city.

A consideration of culturally determined ideas on consumer demand, culture and individuality should have an equal presence alongside economically determined ideas on the movement of capital. Uneven development is an extremely important part of the gentrification process, but part and parcel of that development is political and cultural, as well as economic. In terms of uneven development the contradiction between capital and culture is in many ways a replay of old debates, such as the power of a structural process against the power of agency. This is an old and increasingly tedious contradiction found in the structures versus agency debates. But the fertility in this debate revolves around the contradictory tension between the two, not in arguing which is right and which is wrong, for both are part and parcel of the gentrification process. Uneven development has an economic side and a cultural side, for in the rounds of investment urban actors and/or the culture industry, for example, can ameliorate in the movement of capital. Examples could include landlords who, for their own personal reasons, decide not to disinvest or sell their property to developers, or those in the art world, who decide to locate their cultural capital in a neighbourhood (see Bowler and McBurney, 1991).

So, uneven development theory has to rethink its position beyond economics to allow for the significance of culture and politics, and in that the representation of places, through, for example, image construction. Indeed, the postmodern city spectacle is a cultural example of uneven development in that it reveals capital inequality. The best place to start is at a micro level in examining the contradictory relationship between, say, the motives of a pioneer gentrifier and the movements of capital. Does capital move into an area because of the construction of its own profit preferences, or does consumer demand dictate uneven development? It is at this point of productive tension that an illustration of gentrification would be at its most sensitive.

### 3 Gentrification as a response to nihilism

Postmodern society is nihilistic. There is a lack of reality, an emptiness, but there is also too much reality. People are responding to realities they cannot handle as much as they are to the absence of any single reality. Gentrification can be interpreted as a response to nihilism. The response is an attempt to create a reality of one's own, stolen from past realities, past cultures, in what becomes a recategorization of place.

The productive tension is expressed through neoarchaism, a reverence for the past. In gentrification this is seen in the symbolic usage of period architecture and cultural remnants (see Mills, 1988), which grasps the imagined optimism of a past era. The return to history in neoarchaism legitimates the conspicuous consumption of the gentrified building. Essentially, aesthetic practices legitimate economic gain. It is a consideration of aesthetics from culturally determined analyses and material gain from economically determined analyses, and the tension between the two, which is the most potent for explaining gentrification as a response to nihilism.

On a larger scale, Debord's (1973) 'spectacle' achieves the opposite of the gentrified property in that it *celebrates* economic production and the cultural unreality of deceptive signs and images. The spectacle expresses the dialectical relationship between the economics of modernity and the culture of postmodernity. The spectacle is the cultural manifestation of the ideology of economic production. The extreme is Baudrillard's (1989) hyper-reality where images have taken over exclusively. But what the spectacle does not refer to is its reactionary side: the spectacle as mass denial, of poverty, history, injustice, and so on. This is where a Marxist economic explanation could do justice.

Neoarchaism seen as the gentrifier's response to nihilism reveals the contradictions between economic and cultural explanations. The rise of the new middle class and its ambiguous position can be read from the aesthetics of architecture, not merely from changes in the mode of production. Both the economic material and the symbolic cultural parts of class constitution are expressed in the gentrified property. Economic and cultural capital become sometimes contradictory reflections of each other but the end result must be that they are mutually constitutive.

## IV Conclusion

A refusal to choose between Marxism or postmodernism as my analytical tools has been expressed in the formulation of a dualistic relationship between the two. This dualism has been accommodated through the operation of complementarity. To assist in formulating complementarity I have proposed a dialectical relationship between those viewpoints

found in economically determined and culturally determined explanations of gentrification. The result is that difference is accepted and both ideas are validated and seen to be part of the same process.

This is important in the analysis of gentrification because, following King (1988) and Knox (1991), I argue that the urban landscape is formed by, and a mirror of, a country's political economy, its culture and society. Juxtaposing a Marxist analysis with a cultural analysis allows political economy, culture and society to be considered together, enabling a more sensitive illustration of the gentrification process. After all, '... there is a close connection, in late industrial capitalism, between accumulation and cultural consumption' (Zukin, 1982: 177). The most important feature found in the juxtaposition is that spatially, but not necessarily temporally, economic capital mirrors cultural capital.

The dichotomies which have been played on in the urban geographical literature over the last decade or so have functioned to maintain theoretical order. For example, why do Harvey, Soja and Smith, in the main part, neglect the work of Raymond Williams? These same dichotomies can be seen in the gentrification literature; indeed, more pluralistic interpretations of gentrification have been criticized for their loss of intellectual nerve.

This article does not consider the complementarities between the duality of economically and culturally determined explanations of gentrification in any detail, it merely offers some indication of the productive tensions that exist between the two. The task which I would now advocate is to consider the complementarity between both sets of ideas in more depth.

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